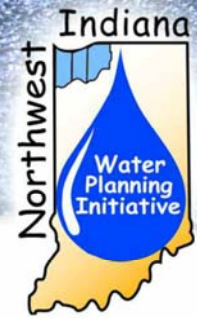


Regional Waters

A Newsletter for MS4 Communities In Northwest Indiana



Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission

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- Educational opportunities at NIRPC
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What is an MS4 Community?

An MS4, or Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, is comprised of drainage systems, municipal streets, catch basins, curbs, gutters, ditches, man-made channels or storm drains owned or operated by a state, city, town, borough, county, parish, district, association or other public body. The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm water Phase II final rule requires permit coverage for storm water discharges from MS4s, primarily those located in urbanized areas. This permit program affects forty communities in Northwest Indiana and is administered by Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). IDEM has established a new rule, Rule 13, establishing criteria for storm

water discharges associated with MS4 storm water conveyance systems.

The reason these rules have been established is because, despite the passage of the Clean Water Act, 40% of surveyed US water bodies are still impaired by pollution and do not meet water quality standards, according to the 1996 National Water Quality Inventory. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers pollution from all diffuse sources, including urban storm water pollution and agricultural runoff, to be the most important source of contamination in the nation's waters. The problem of polluted storm water runoff has two main components: increased volume and rate of runoff from impervious surfaces and the concentra-

tion of pollutants in the runoff. Both components are directly related to development in urban and urbanizing areas. When impervious cover reaches between 10 and 20 percent of the area of a watershed, ecological stress becomes clearly apparent.

Because of the magnitude of fiscal and environmental impact the EPA mandated Phase II storm water rules will have on our region's MS4 communities, NIRPC has developed model storm water management ordinances and guide and other resources to assist local MS4 communities in meeting the requirements.

Please visit NIRPC's MS4 website for more information – go to www.nirpc.org and click on the MS4 Community Partnership logo.

Urban Development

Urban development has a profound impact on the quality of streams, rivers and lakes. Initial clearing and grading of a site alters its hydrology. Removal of vegetation and natural depressions, as well as soil disturbance and compaction, contribute to destruction of a site's natural water storage capacity. As a result, rainfall on the site is rapidly converted into storm water runoff, carrying sedi-

ment, toxic materials and construction debris into our waters. After construction is complete, things go from bad to worse. Impervious surfaces like roof tops, roads, parking lots and driveways no longer allow the rainfall to soak into the ground. The resulting increase in runoff can easily overwhelm existing drainage systems, resulting in "improvements" to the system such as curb and

gutters, enclosed storm sewers or lined channels to speed removal of the runoff. This means that more untreated runoff gets into our waterways even faster, increasing the amounts of pollutants responsible for the degradation of our waters. By minimizing the amount of contaminants in the runoff, and slowing its movement, we can have a tremendous impact on water quality.



Runoff into Lake Michigan

2006 MS4 Educational Opportunities at NIRPC

Brownbag Luncheon Series Workshops will be held at NIRPC in Portage in May, August and October from 11:15am—1pm; the public is invited.

May 4 Septic System Management. *New septic technology, rules and regulations.*

August 3 Green Infrastructure and Planning with POWER

What green infrastructure is and how communities can plan, incorporate and benefit by protecting their green spaces.

October 5 Pervious Paving for Stormwater Management. *A number of innovative concepts are available to protect water quality; find out how these products are performing in Indiana.*

REGIONAL CONFERENCE– Thursday September 14, 2006 8am-4pm

Water Resources and Smart Growth: Linking Development Infrastructure and Water Policies– A Smart Growth Score Card– How Does Northwest Indiana Measure Up?

Best Management Practices Bus Tour– Friday, September 15, 2006 8am – 3pm.

Tour schedule, speakers and routes will be announced in June.

**One Inch
of Rainfall
on 1000 sq
ft of roof
=
623 gallons
of
storm water
runoff!**

Lake Michigan Districts Household Waste Collection Program

2006 MS4 Community Collection Dates

*Saturday collection times 9am –2 pm

**Friday collection times 1pm—6 pm

- April 29* **Cedar Lake Town Hall**
 May 6* **Whiting City Garage**
 May 19** **Gary IUN**
 June 10* **Porter County Fairgrounds**
 June 17* **Griffith Public Works**
 July 1* **Hobart City Barns**
 July 15* **Chesterton Westchester IS**
 Aug 4 ** **St John Lake Central HS**
 Aug 19 * **Portage HS**
 Sept 9 * **Highland Public Works**
 Sept 30* **Porter County Fairgrounds**
 Oct 28* **Munster Town Hall**

Dates in red include the gas can exchange program. Bring in your old gas can and exchange it for a new, environmentally friendly 2.5 gallon CARB gas can.

What can I dispose of?

Aerosols

Automotive Supplies: antifreeze, oils and other fluids

Batteries: automotive and household

Corrosives

Mercury Containing Products: fluorescent tubes, thermometers– silver bulbs, thermostats, etc

Paint and Related Products: oil based paints, thinners, solvents

Pesticides: fungicides, herbicides, insecticides, etc

Waste Fuels: diesel, gasoline, kerosene, other flammable liquids

What is not accepted?

Ammunition and Explosives: contact your local fire department for disposal

Commercial Hazardous Waste

Latex Paint: remove lid from latex paint cans, allow to dry completely and dispose of with regular garbage.

Best Management Practices for Homeowners

Garden With Care!

Fertilize with care. Select a fertilizer low in phosphorus (P), do not apply near water bodies or storm drains and sweep excess fertilizer back onto your lawn. Avoid application of lawn care chemicals before heavy rains. Allow grass to go dormant during periods of drought. Mow less frequently—longer grass has deeper roots and needs less water.

Consider using native plants, they need far less water and

chemicals to flourish in your garden. Install a rain garden or an old-fashioned rain barrel to collect excess rainwater. This water can be used to water during dry spells. Mulching helps retain water, control weeds and pests.

Take Care of your Car!

Take good care of your car- fix any leaks promptly, and dispose of used oil and other fluids properly. Wash your car on the lawn, or take it to the car wash.

Pick up after your pet!

Not only is it the considerate

thing to do, it also keeps harmful bacteria out of our water supply. Dispose of the waste in the toilet or the trash.

Dispose of Waste Properly!

Instead of dumping unwanted products at home, transport them to a local hazardous waste center or collection day in your community. Contact your community for disposal locations and guidelines.

Sweep it up!

Use a broom instead of your hose to clean debris off side-

Construction Rules for MS4 Communities

MS4 communities are required to develop, implement and enforce programs to reduce pollutants in storm water runoff to their MS4 from construction activities that result in land disturbance of greater than or equal to one acre. The local Soil and Water Conservation District will provide recommendations to the MS4 on individual construction projects. Construction plans must be submitted to the proper authority for review and approval.

Suggestions to help with meeting requirements include establishing ordinances requiring appropriate erosion and sediment controls and control of other wastes with the local enforcement agency. Also, establish procedures for site plan review that consider potential water quality impacts to help with compliance and enforcement efforts. Conducting local site compliance inspections ensures that BMPs are properly installed, and

provides an opportunity to provide guidance, issue warnings or assess penalties. Provide the public with the information necessary to allow identification of instances of non-compliance in the community.

Good planning and installation of BMPs targeting each stage of the erosion process can provide successful control of erosion and sedimentation from construction sites.

Public Participation and Involvement

Public input is invaluable to the success of any MS4 program. An active and involved community allows for broader public support and expertise, and helps to build relationships within the community.

Provide opportunities for the public to participate in the development and implementation of community storm water management programs. Hold public

meetings and establish citizen advisory panels, encouraging all members of the community to participate. Contact local schools about student volunteer opportunities.

Community cleanup days, tree plantings, rain gardens, and storm drain marking projects are all valuable community efforts. Coastal Week is a great time to hold events that will help

your community become an active part of the program.



Construction Site Basics:

1. Limit the extent and duration of land disturbance.

2. Divert incoming flows and impede internal flows.

3. Install sediment capturing devices to retain sediment picked up on the project site.

Helpful websites:

Stormwater Manager's Resource Center
www.stormwatercenter.net

Rain Gardens
www.raingardennetwork.com

Watershed Protection
www.cwp.org

Riverwatch
www.in.gov/dnr/riverwatch

Drain Marking
www.in.gov/dnr/stormdrain

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission

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Click on the logo
above at NIRPC's
website to find out
more about MS4 in
your community!

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission is a council of governments responsible for regional planning in the areas of transportation, environmental management, and economic development for Lake, Porter, and La Porte Counties. NIRPC's public involvement mission is to reach out to the citizens of these counties to engage in dialogue about the region's planning needs.

Here's How You Can Get Involved:

- **Attend meetings. Visit our website for current news about regional planning activities and our meeting calendar.**
- **Volunteer for a task force or working group.**
- **Get to know your commissioner- express your opinions and share your ideas.**
- **Invite an expert to speak at a group meeting for your neighborhood or organization.**

The MS4 Community Partnership:

George van Til – Lake County Surveyor, Kevin Breitzke – Porter County Surveyor, Cedar Lake, Crown Point, Dyer, East Chicago, Gary, Griffith, Highland, Hobart, Lake Station, Merrillville, Munster, New Chicago, Schererville, St. John, Chesterton, Portage, Porter, Valparaiso, Nature Works Conservation District, Twin Creeks Conservation District, Valparaiso Lakes Area Conservation District.



...remember, we're all in this together!

The Regional Waters newsletter is published by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission's (NIRPC) Environmental Department as part of the Northwest Indiana MS4 Storm water Community outreach program. In addition to providing valuable information to regional MS4 communities, the newsletter may provide information to stakeholders on other water efforts, projects, and issues that impact the Region's waterways. This newsletter is published quarterly; articles may be submitted to NIRPC's Environmental Planner, Mary Beth Wiseman, mwiseman@nirpc.org.