

# THE MS4 PROGRAM

The Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program was first required in 1987 through amendments to the Clean Water Act (CWA). During Phase I, communities greater than 100,000 in population were regulated. In 1999 the Phase II MS4 program was initiated, when communities larger than 10,000, or with significant potential for growth, were regulated. The program consists of six minimum control measures (MCMs). Each MCM includes a variety of activities and goals, customized for the community, which are tracked and documented to gauge program success. The MCMs include:

- Public Education & Outreach
- Public Participation & Involvement
- Illicit Discharge Detection & Elimination
- Construction Site Runoff Management
- Post-Construction Stormwater Management
- Municipal Operations & Good Housekeeping

## MS4 FACTS

- The program is an unfunded federal mandate. Communities must implement the program with local resources and funding strategies.
- U. S. Census results are used to determine community populations. Based on the 2000 Census, there were almost 7,500 MS4s in the United States.
- Each community receives a five-year stormwater permit. Throughout each permit, communities are required to evaluate program performance to measure success.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) periodically updates the requirements of the MS4 program, which are generally implemented by each state.
- In Indiana, the MS4 program is regulated by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) through the General NPDES Permit INR040000.

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For more information, please visit

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**MISSION:** The Southern Indiana Stormwater Advisory Committee is a regional partnership whose core function is to guide stormwater quality programs in a cost-effective, consistent, and efficient manner, striving through collaborative efforts to educate all constituents, encourage involvement, and implement new planning approaches to improve the quality of life for the region, and thus society, now and into the future.

## Key Goals:

- Help implement the federally mandated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program.
- Provide a platform for collaboration among member communities to work toward regional stormwater goals.
- Coordinate regional events, such as public meetings and community clean-ups, to both educate and involve the public.
- Efficiently implement the MS4 program by developing and sharing materials and resources, such as stormwater educational materials and resources for contractors, builders, businesses, residents and other constituents.
- Protect water resources through the development of consistent policies and reference materials and through sound environmental stewardship.

## SWAC HISTORY

Indiana began implementation of the MS4 program in 2003, and with it came a new and significant burden placed on each regulated community. Communities in southern Indiana recognized a number of consistent needs in fulfilling each municipality's MS4 permit. The communities began by holding a series of meetings to better understand the MS4 program and requirements. Over time, opportunities for collaboration were identified, primarily focusing on education and outreach. As the SWAC developed, additional opportunities to enhance collaboration, develop consistency where feasible, and maximize available resources were recognized.



Currently, the SWAC meets quarterly. Meetings are open to the public and participation is encouraged. The SWAC also hosts an annual workshop to focus on specific educational efforts, such as construction site management, post-construction water quality design, and other topics required under the MS4 program. Technical assistance and coordination of some activities is provided by a consultant. Local Soil & Water Conservation Districts also assist the permitted communities with SWAC activities. Though outside support is relied upon for certain activities, the Committee is independent and self-sufficient, and their efforts have been recognized by IDEM.

## SWAC ACTIVITIES

The SWAC collaborates to implement many requirements of the MS4 program and to improve water quality. Major milestones to date include:

- Consistent education and outreach messages and materials including brochures, the SWAC website, and stormwater billboards.
- MS4 ordinances that are fundamentally consistent yet tailored to each community
- SWAC Best Management Practices Manual
- Illicit Discharge Detection & Elimination Standard Operating Procedures Field Guide
- Qualified Professional Inspector Program: Contractor Self-Inspection Program
- Annual Workshops:
  - Construction Site Management
  - Post-Construction Stormwater
  - Illicit Discharge Detection & Elimination
  - Green Infrastructure
  - Municipal Training & Procedures
- Annual Stormwater Awareness Week
- Drainage Detention System Guidebook: A Resource for Basin Owners on General Assessment & Maintenance Procedures



*"When you wash your car in the driveway, that soap, dirt and grease don't just stay in your driveway." Educational materials, such those shown here, are displayed and distributed by the SWAC to enhance public awareness.*

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

A variety of elements are needed for regional partnerships to be successful. Every community has different needs, and every region has their own challenges. Some of the fundamentals that have led to this successful partnership include:

- Actively participate in meetings!
- Recognize and embrace common goals
- Start with the basics and build from there
- Think outside of the box
- Help elected officials understand the importance of your committee
- Embrace "give and take"
- Regularly communicate with others in the group: phone calls, email, lunch meetings
- Speak up and share what you value
- Rely on sub-committees to handle specific activities
- Develop a mission statement and a core set of goals for your organization
- Revisit your goals periodically to ensure they are meeting the needs of the group
- Constantly challenge each other to have more a significant impact as a group
- Recognize the synergy of several working towards a common goal

The SWAC is a platform for collaboration, but does not wholly satisfy any community's permit. Rather, the SWAC is a platform for communication and collaboration, which has allowed member communities to better implement the MS4 program in a highly efficient manner to meet regulatory needs and serve the southern Indiana region.

