

Horsley Witten Group

Sustainable Environmental Solutions

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SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION
Stormwater Good Housekeeping Workshop Series
Workshop 1 – Parks and Recreation Staff
March 10, 2015, 8-11 am
Northern Essex Community College, Lawrence, MA

Presented by: Brian Kuchar, PE, RLA and Gary Hedman, Horsley Witten Group, Inc.

Hosted by: Merrimack Valley Stormwater Collaborative

Discussion - Experiences from Participants

1) Question (from Presenters): What issues have you had with water quality and what have you addressed?

Responses:

- Issues with pond in Newburyport which has long-term pollutant buildup. Feasibility study was completed to review management options, which indicated that dredging would be most effective. Currently waiting on funding.
- Interactive water feature in downtown area of Newburyport currently requires dechlorination to provide adequate water quality. Currently working on addressing equipment needed.
- Waterfront park area includes an athletic field and an off leash area that are located in a floodplain, which floods every year. The off-leash area is designated per the City of Newburyport's ordinance. Not sure how to address pollutant reduction in this area.

2) Question (from Presenters): Does anyone have an Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Plan in place?

Responses:

- No. Having an O&M Plan would not make any difference. We wouldn't do anything differently.

3) Question (from Presenters): Does anyone have any good housekeeping practices currently being implemented?

Responses:

- Town of Dracut currently has an irrigation ban.

4) Question (from Audience): For municipalities with retention basins, is it a good idea to clear them completely, including taking out trees and brush?

Responses:

- Maintenance of retention basins is site-specific and depends on several factors including:

- *Frequency of maintenance*: If the basin has not been maintained or is maintained infrequently, vegetation growth may be significant and well-rooted. In these situations, these basins may function as wetland areas and may be able to be classified as such, which will reduce required maintenance. If capacity is an issue, vegetation can be removed, though there is a potential for larger brush and tree roots to destabilize soils, particularly side slopes.
- *Presence of sediment forebays*: If the basin doesn't have a sediment forebay, maintenance of vegetation is likely necessary to maintain water quality.
- *Pollutant removal goals*: Existing vegetation can provide water quality benefits (i.e., pollutant uptake) and improve infiltration via root growth (again, depending on site-specific factors). Note that leaf litter can provide a source of phosphorus, so regular pruning and trimming vegetation could be necessary.

5) Question (from Audience): Where are the best places for annual car washes?

Responses:

- Best location is in an area with a connection to the municipal wastewater treatment plant to allow wash water to be properly treated before discharging into waterways.
- Gravel lot may be an option to encourage infiltration and treatment of wash water runoff.
- Pervious areas, such as open turf locations, may also be an option to encourage infiltration. However, this could result in the disturbance of turf and lead to erosion.

6) Question (from Audience): What is the best soap or detergent to use for car washes?

Responses:

- Most soaps or detergents are OK. Choose one that is biodegradable and is phosphate-free.
- Good housekeeping practice is to avoid directly dumping detergents or car wash runoff into storm inlets.

7) Question (from Audience): How do the new MS4 requirements address golf courses?

Responses:

- Golf courses are not specifically noted in the 2014 Draft MS4 Permit. However, pollutants to impaired waters are addressed, which would require golf courses to improve water quality and limit discharges to impaired water bodies. In addition, the Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) Program requires plans and procedures to manage any illicit discharges which may originate from golf course maintenance.

8) Question (from Audience): Who has jurisdiction over golf courses – state or municipality?

Responses:

- Golf courses are regulated at the municipal level. The MS4 permit addresses golf courses that are municipally-owned.

- 9) **Statement (from Audience):** Methuen currently has banned dogs from parks and cemeteries. They have signage that notes enforcement by police, but residents do not seem deterred. This is hard to enforce, and it creates bad publicity for municipalities to give tickets.

Question and Answer Session

- 1) **Question (from Audience):** If you eliminated mowing/managing areas with native plantings, wouldn't this promote invasive species if the native soil had invasives?

Responses:

- For most native and low mow seed mixes, mowing is required twice per year. Regular maintenance should allow for proper competition to address invasive species.

- 2) **Question (from Audience):** Are ticks an issue with low mow?

Responses:

- Yes, ticks could be an issue. Again, these are recommended in park areas where there will be low or no active recreation (e.g., near park trails or pathways).

- 3) **Statement (from Audience):** There were a lot of BMPs recommended here including reducing pavement, incorporating vegetated buffers and native plants. These can be great climate change techniques.

- 4) **Question (from Audience):** Neither the DPW nor our transfer station are covered under the MS4 (do not drain to MS4). Do we need to be addressing MS4 requirements? We are currently treating them as though they are.

Responses:

- You do not need to address MS4 requirements. However, landfills, land application sites and open dumps are covered by the Multi-Sector General Permit. Similar to the Construction General Permit, this permit requires filing of Notice of Intent (NOI) and the development of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP), which includes implementing pollution prevention/good housekeeping BMPs to address pollutants in runoff.

Discussion - Opportunities for Regional Efficiencies

- 1) **Question (from Presenters):** Are any communities sharing information on a regional level currently or are there any that have identified regional sharing opportunities?

Responses:

- MVPC is working on it. Workshops/trainings help to initiate conversations.
- Newbury and Newburyport currently share public education opportunities. One of these activities is the 'Stormwater Faire' which is a stormwater education opportunity for elementary school children. This activity is currently sponsored by four towns. Could share template with other communities.
- Could consider opportunities with neighbor communities.

- Dracut and Methuen share a Hazardous Waste Day.

2) Question (from Presenters): Are there opportunities to share the drafting of regulations?

Responses:

- MVPC is currently discussing this.

3) Question (from Presenters): Are there opportunities to share equipment?

Responses:

- Easier for regional facilities, not as easy between communities.
- May be opportunity for some communities to share equipment if they shared facilities. For example, Methuen doesn't generate enough yard waste to manage it efficiently, so they do not have the equipment (e.g., tub grinder), but may make more sense in other communities.

4) Question (from Presenters): Are there any other opportunities to consolidate efforts within communities?

Responses:

- Yes, we can approach different departments to address pollutant prevention (e.g., building department).
- Use volunteers. Get volunteers through watershed associations, through word of mouth to public, and with the support of elected officials.

5) Question (from Audience): How do you dispose of catch basin cleanings?

Responses:

- See MassDEP's website:
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/recycle/regulations/management-of-catch-basin-cleanings.html>.