



State of Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

Southwest District Office

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Ted Strickland, Governor
Lee Fisher, Lieutenant Governor
Chris Korteski, Director

November 4, 2009

Mr. William Brock
City of Monroe
233 South Main Street
Monroe, OH 45050

RE: Stormwater Program Evaluation

Dear Mr. Brock:

On Wednesday August 12, 2009, I met with Brad Collins to evaluate the city of Monroe's Stormwater Management Program. Jim Rozelle from Stantec was also present during the meeting. The evaluation consisted of discussions about each of the 6 "Minimum Control Measures", which collectively form the framework for small MS4 permits. Note that an evaluation is much less involved than a true audit, and that audits are likely in the future as stormwater programs mature.

The purpose of this letter is to summarize stormwater program activities in Monroe, and to recommend steps to improve compliance with current requirements. Program performance standards and annual reporting requirements listed in the current small MS4 permit also have been included following discussions of and recommendations for each MCM.

Based on discussions with Brad and Jim, and a review of the city's stormwater management plan and recent annual reports, I offer the following observations and recommendations:

MCMs 1 and 2 – Public Involvement, Participation and Education (PIPE):

From the information provided in annual reports, the city appears to be doing a reasonable job providing stormwater-related educational materials to its residents. Efforts to include stormwater topics within local school curricula are ongoing, and kids from Monroe have attended the Butler County Water Festival in recent years. Local Boy Scout Troops and members of the local Optimists Club have been involved with marking stormsewer inlets around the city. As of August 2009, roughly 90% of the inlets have been marked, and stormsewer inlets in new subdivisions are required to have stamped grates.

Recommendations

Examples of brochures, scripts for public service announcements, or newsletter articles provided to city residents should be provided in future annual reports. Despite reference to these activities in the city's original stormwater plan and subsequent annual reports, proof has not been provided. Likewise, specific information detailing PIPE interactions with the

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Miami Conservancy District, the Southwest Ohio Stormwater Collaborative, or other groups, should be included in annual reports. If these sorts of activities do not occur, a simple explanation is all that's needed in the applicable annual report.

It is very difficult to determine the impacts of environmental outreach, especially when behavioral change is the ultimate goal. Noting the numbers of interactions between citizens and the city with respect to stormwater management issues is about the only alternative. This could be accomplished by tracking the number of visitors to the part of the city's website that contains stormwater management information. (The city should explore ways to modify its website so that stormwater related information is more easily found.) A short survey about stormwater management issues could be added to the website. Results could help gauge the level of understanding of stormwater issues in the community, and be used to help guide future stormwater program activities.

Other ideas for determining the effectiveness of outreach and education efforts should be included, when appropriate, in the city's revised stormwater management plan.

MCM 1 - Performance Standards: Your stormwater public education and outreach program shall include more than one mechanism and target at least five different stormwater themes or messages over the permit term. At a minimum, at least one theme or message shall be targeted to the development community. Your stormwater public education and outreach program shall reach at least 50 percent of your population over the permit term.

Annual Reporting: Your annual report shall identify each mechanism used, including each stormwater theme, audience targeted and estimate of how many people were reached by each mechanism.

MCM 2- Performance Standards: Your stormwater public involvement/participation program shall include at a minimum, five public involvement activities over the permit term.

Annual Reporting: Your annual report shall identify each public involvement/participation activity conducted, including a brief description of activity and include an estimate of how many people participated.

MCM 3 – Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE):

Mapping

While work appears to be ongoing, the city has yet to create a comprehensive map which shows the locations of stormsewer outfalls within its borders, as well as the names of

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streams which receive discharges via said outfalls. Modifying existing maps to show outfalls will be acceptable if this is easier than creating something new. Note that over the next 5 year permit term, MS4s will be required to map their entire stormsewer network.

IDDE Ordinance

It's not clear how the IDDE ordinance (or its summary) included in recent Annual Reports addresses the issue of actual illicit discharges discovered within the city's borders. Submitted information appears to speak only to the stormwater utility the city established in 2003. The intent of an IDDE ordinance, among other things, is to empower the city to investigate instances of actual illegal dumping to its stormsewer network, and to levy fines or other penalties if the offending party continues to dump.

Home Sewage Treatment Systems (HSTS)

Fewer than 100 residential septic systems are believed to be present in Monroe, though it's not known if any discharge to the city's stormsewer network. While such systems may not be posing problems due to their relatively low numbers, a list of discharging HSTSs must still be provided. Once compiled, the list need not be duplicated in each year's annual report. As homes get connected to public sewers (assuming this even happens), the list can be revised accordingly in the appropriate annual report.

Outfall screening

Information describing a suspected illicit discharge situation in 2007 is relevant for inclusion in stormwater program annual reports (preferably in the following year's report), but the overall strategy (and schedule) for examining stormsewer outfalls around the city remains unclear. A checklist developed for use during visual inspections of outfalls has not been included with annual reports, or with the initial stormwater plan submitted in 2003.

Recommendations

The city will need to complete mapping of its stormsewer system before its current MS4 permit expires in January, 2014. Annual reports submitted between now and then should summarize the status of the effort, and when completion of the work is expected.

Monroe needs to modify its IDDE ordinance so that the city is empowered to address, when necessary, illicit discharges to its stormsewer network by residents or businesses. This must be done as soon as is practicable.

While home septic systems are not thought to be an issue in Monroe, a list of discharging HSTSs is still expected to be included in the revised stormwater management plan.

It appears the city has been actively walking streams within its borders and looking for evidence of illicit discharges. But a broader overview of what is planned from year to year regarding dry weather screening must be added to Monroe's stormwater management

plan. Details regarding specific situations can be provided in appropriate annual reports.

MCM 3 - Performance Standards: Your stormwater illicit discharge detection and elimination program shall include or have included an initial dry-weather screening of all your stormwater outfalls over the permit term. Your program shall establish priorities and specific goals for long-term systemwide surveillance of your MS4, as well as for specific investigations of outfalls and their tributary area where previous surveillance demonstrates a high likelihood of illicit discharges. Data collected each year shall be evaluated and priorities and goals shall be revised annually based on this evaluation. Your comprehensive stormsewer system map shall be updated annually as needed.

Annual Reporting: Your annual report shall document the following: (1) number of outfalls dryweather screened, (2) number of dry-weather flows identified, (3) number of illicit discharges identified, (4) number of illicit discharges eliminated, (5) provide schedules for elimination of illicit connections that have been identified but have yet to be eliminated and (6) summary of any stormsewer system mapping updates.

MCMs 4 and 5 - Construction and Post-Construction Runoff Control:
Despite reading the city's stormwater management plan, and our discussions during the program evaluation, it remains unclear how proposals for new construction projects are reviewed to ensure viable sediment and erosion control practices will be installed and maintained. The goal for each regulated project is to install useful controls in appropriate locations to minimize the amount of eroded sediments lost off site in stormwater runoff.

Nor is it clear how much attention post-construction stormwater management requirements receive during the pre-construction review process. This also must be better explained in the city's revised stormwater management plan.

Recommendations

The city should re-write these 2 sections of the plan to clarify how proposed (qualifying) developments are reviewed so that erosion control and post-construction stormwater management requirements are met. The revised plan should also include specifics regarding enforcement procedures the city will use when necessary to ensure compliance with its erosion and sediment control regulations. A copy of the city's finalized long term operations and maintenance plan, as well the revised Stormwater Erosion and Sediment Control Design Manual should be included with the revised plan. Relevant ordinances and other information can be included as appendices.

MCM 4 - Performance Standards: Your construction site stormwater control program shall include preconstruction stormwater pollution prevention plan review of all projects from construction activities that result in a land disturbance of greater than or equal to one acre. To ensure compliance, these applicable sites shall be initially inspected.

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The frequency of follow-up inspections shall be on a monthly basis unless you document your procedures for prioritizing inspections such as location to a waterway, amount of disturbed area, compliance of site, etc. If you initially had coverage under a previous version of this permit you shall revise your program to satisfy these performance standards, if needed, within two years of when your coverage under this general permit was granted.

Annual Reporting: Your annual report shall document the following: (1) number of applicable sites in your jurisdiction, (2) number of pre-construction stormwater pollution prevention plan reviews performed, (3) number and frequency of site inspections, (4) number of violation letters issued, (5) number of enforcement actions taken and (6) number of complaints received and number followed up on.

MCM 5 – Performance Standards: Your post-construction SWMP shall include pre-construction stormwater pollution prevention plan review of all projects from construction activities that result in a land disturbance of greater than or equal to one acre to ensure that required controls are designed per requirements. These applicable sites shall be inspected to ensure that controls are installed per requirements. Your program shall also ensure that long-term operation and maintenance (O&M) plans are developed and agreements in place for all applicable sites. If you initially had coverage under a previous version of this permit you shall revise your program to satisfy these performance standards, if needed, within two years of when your coverage under this general permit was granted.

Annual Reports: Your annual reports shall document the following: (1) number of applicable sites in your jurisdiction requiring post-construction controls, (2) number of pre-construction stormwater pollution prevention plan reviews performed, (3) number of inspections performed to ensure as built per requirements, and (4) number of long-term operation and maintenance (O&M) plans developed and agreements in place.

MCM 6 – Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping:
Little time was spent discussing specifics of this portion of the city's stormwater management plan. Based on reviewing information provided in annual reports, it appears the city has yet to develop an operation and maintenance program that addresses the requirements of this minimum control measure. When the city rewrites its stormwater management plan, it should address the general requirements outlined in the current small MS4 permit and include needed information in the appropriate section of the plan. More specific information, such as employee training documentation, amounts of debris collected from street sweeping, and materials usage can be provided in annual reports. Other materials of concern from a stormwater management standpoint include storage of de-icing salts and street sweepings, and amounts of pesticides or herbicides used to treat city parks or other green spaces. Also note that certain facilities owned and operated by the city at

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which industrial activities occur (vehicle maintenance and composting, among others) are required to prepare site-specific stormwater pollution prevention plans.

MCM 6 - Performance Standards: Your pollution prevention/good housekeeping program shall include, at a minimum, an annual employee training. Your operation and maintenance program shall include appropriate procedures, controls, maintenance schedules and recordkeeping to address Part III.B.6.d.iii of this permit.

Annual Reporting: Your annual reports shall document the following: (1) summary of employee training program(s) implemented with number of employees that attended and (2) summary of activities and procedures implemented for your operation and maintenance program.

Conclusions

Monroe has addressed many of the requirements expected of small MS4s, but has much work to do before its program could be considered compliant. Rewriting its stormwater management plan, in light of this evaluation, and current requirements, should be a good first step. The goal of the written plan is to produce a workable document that generally explains how it will meet the intent of NPDES permitting requirements for each of the 6 minimum control measures established by USEPA.

Annual reports should reflect what has gone on within the city during the year to which the report applies. Copying and submitting mostly similar information from one year to the next and calling it an annual report will no longer be acceptable. The city can use the prescribed annual reporting form developed by OEPA as a guide for creating its report, or it can obtain permission from Ohio EPA to use an alternative reporting format, one which relies on simply stating in a few sentences what relevant activities it undertook for the year in question.

If you have questions about anything in this letter, please contact me at (937)-285-6442 or via email at chris.cotton@epa.state.oh.us.

Sincerely,



Chris Cotton
Division of Surface Water

cc: OEPA/SWDO/DSW Files
Anthony Robinson, OEPA/DSW/CO

CC/mab