

Central NY Stormwater Coalition Steering Committee Meeting – April 9, 2010

The meeting was initiated with a brief discussion of the results of the priority issues survey distributed in March. The issues were cumulatively ranked as follows:

1. Program compliance redundancy
2. Evolving program requirements
3. Evolving technologies, design standards and procedures
4. Funding
5. Local regulatory and enforcement inequalities
6. Locating regional/watershed stormwater projects where they will yield positive results

Also, more than one respondent listed education and training of municipal officials as an additional need under the “Other” category, and one respondent indicated that although he ranked the issues they really are all of significant importance and worthy of equal consideration.

In light of these results, CNYRPDB attempted to better refine some possible first steps for the Coalition by revisiting the Annual Reports from Years 5 and 6 to get a better sense of the MS4s’ general progress and where the most immediate needs are. For Minimum Control Measure (MCM) 1 (Public Education and Outreach), it was noted that participation in CNYRPDB’s cost-sharing program was unequal, particularly relative to attendance at meetings/trainings. It was suggested that some MS4s may not be sufficiently aware of the opportunities or that they are necessary for compliance, and that a letter from NYSDEC Region 7 to remind them of the importance may result in better attendance. There was discussion of shared reporting and its advantages relative to MCM 1.

Relative to MCM 2 (Public Involvement and Participation) it was generally agreed that there would be benefit to having a point of contact or agency to compile information concerning public involvement activities taking place around the SUA, and to make the appropriate contacts to ensure that the link of such activities to the stormwater program is made.

Regarding MCM 3 (Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination), CNYRPDB inquired as to whether MS4s found the overlap of jurisdictions (Village/Town/County/State, etc.) challenging, in terms of mapping of sewersheds and/or enforcement. MS4s in attendance indicated that enforcement was not a particular concern, as violations are traced to the originating MS4 when they occur and in Onondaga County, notification happens through the County IDDE program. Sewershed mapping may present more of a challenge. Onondaga County has developed a protocol for mapping of inlets and conveyances that could be shared/demonstrated to other MS4s. Generally, most sewershed mapping at this stage has been done based on outfall locations and Digital Elevation Maps in GIS, and MS4s lack the resources to pursue any more detailed mapping. A grant should be pursued to allow all MS4s in the area to complete the requirement according to a consistent system.

Concerning MCM 4 and 5 (Construction and Post-Construction Runoff Control) it was suggested that the recommendations prepared by the Construction/Post-Construction Working Group in 2006 be re-examined to determine 1) to what extent they are being implemented 2) whether they need to be

updated relative to changes in both the construction and MS4 permits 3) ways of improving funding mechanisms for post-construction practice maintenance. Participants noted that presently, the process is not efficient because multiple engineers look at the same sites; the municipal engineer inspects the site on behalf of the MS4, and the developer's design engineer or other consultant typically inspects the site on behalf of the developer. Code enforcement officers, meanwhile, complete their own inspections but these are generally completed at the level of the individual lot.

It was agreed that there is a possible role for the Coalition to play in completing construction inspections (MCM 4) on behalf of the municipalities, to standardize the process and reduce cost. Despite the size and typical development patterns of the SUA, it is believed that this role could be reasonably handled by a small number of staff, but due to the seasonal nature of the requirement, it makes the most sense to complete the work through a contract agreement with a third party. The Code Enforcement Officer would still be responsible for enforcement action as required by the MS4 permit.

For MCM 5 (Post-Construction Stormwater Management), one of the larger burdens on the MS4s is inspection and maintenance of post-construction practices. Highway departments often lack training and the proper equipment, which results in improper work or no work at all when maintenance is required. It was suggested that a separate bid package be prepared on behalf of the Coalition to complete post-construction stormwater management maintenance and inspection work. The SWCD office might be a potential candidate for consideration due to their technical expertise and relatively low operating cost.

For both of the above programs, formation of an MCM 4/5 subcommittee is suggested to examine the details of how the proposed programs would work and to develop specifications.

Concerning MCM 6 (Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping), CNYRPDB suggested a municipal services assessment survey to identify excess equipment capacities and opportunities for shared equipment use. The County noted that EPA provides the opportunity for municipal highway garages to perform voluntary compliance audits, but when issues are identified the timetable to correct them is very aggressive. It might help if a representative from EPA came in and gave an overview of what typical findings and requirements of these audits are, since MS4s may be reluctant to share information about operational shortfalls with EPA or the Coalition.

The need to educate municipal decision-makers (mayors, supervisors, board members) was again noted. A possible forum for this is the Associations of Mayors and Supervisors. It was noted that the CNYRPDB Stormwater Guide for Municipal Officials is a good starting point for new officials, as it is broken down by specific job titles.