

# MS4 Cooperative Effort: Why Here and Why Now?

*David Kubek, Senior Planner*

*Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board*

# Changing Stormwater Program Requirements

- Audits and enforcement
  - SWMP Plan
  - Annual self-assessment
- New MS<sub>4</sub> Permit and Construction Permit
  - Increasing cost of implementation
- Major revisions to NYS Stormwater Management Design Manual

# Changing Stormwater Program Requirements

- Onondaga Lake Watershed requirements
  - Enhanced Phosphorus Removal standards
  - Retrofit program
- No Net Increase of Pollutants of Concern in impaired watersheds
  - Modeling and assessment of BMPs
- Possible new Stormwater Final Rule from EPA on horizon?

# Common Issues for all MS4s

- Common program requirements
  - Outfall and sewershed mapping, outfall inspections and illicit discharge trackdown
  - Inventory, inspection and maintenance of post-construction stormwater management practices
  - Annual reporting and SWMP assessment
  - Solicitation of public input and participation

# Common Issues for all MS4s

- Common training and education needs
  - Municipal staff, construction industry, etc.
- Similar equipment and staffing needs
  - Duplication of effort – not financially sustainable
- Watershed-level issues transcend municipal boundaries

# Previous obstacles to cooperation

- Need for long-term leadership directly from one or more MS<sub>4</sub>s
  - Signs of positive change and initiative present
- Lack of communication between/within MS<sub>4</sub>s
- Overall sense that the program is having little to no water quality benefit and is not being enforced

# Why now is the time to overcome obstacles

- Rules of the game are changing
  - Audits, enforcement, need to show results
  - Increased pressure to work collaboratively (watershed modeling, retrofit programs, regional stormwater entities, etc.)
- MS<sub>4</sub>s will have to accomplish more with fewer resources under new permits
  - Times are tough and funds are few
- Other urban areas in NYS have formalized coalitions and are realizing benefits

# Benefits of cooperation

- Unified and more recognized/credible voice in dialogue with NYSDEC
- Easier to develop funding requests – improved eligibility to receive money
  - Formal cooperation, maximized efficiency favored
- Consistency in implementing regulations
  - Uniform process among MS<sub>4</sub>s promotes fairness
- Shared staff and services reduces cost, improves communication, pools knowledge
  - We know from past successes that it works