Website checklist for MS4 requirements: 2021/20222 permit

Education and Outreach: Minimum Control Measure #1

* Smart salting
  + Link to PDF/video
* Pet waste
  + Link to PDF/video
* Yard care best practices
  + Link to PDF poster, video, or brochure
  + Examples: “*To help take care of its surface water and use water wisely, the City/Township recommends:”*
    - *Mowing grass at 3” or more to encourage deeper root growth, retain soil moisture, and help grass be more resilient to droughts.*
    - *Keep grass clippings off of pavement. Blow them away from pavement as you mow or sweep/blow them back onto the lawn as your last step.*
    - *Never water pavement. Fix stray irrigation heads that are spraying away from where they’re intended, and set sprinklers carefully.*
    - *Water grass early in the morning or late at night, and accommodate for rainfall. Turfgrass only needs about 1”/week to survive. Try to prevent watering during rain events.*
    - *Try washing the car on the lawn to reduce soap and road grime that runs into the stormdrain, or visit a commercial car wash that sends wastewater to a sanitary treatment plant.*
    - *“Link to more info”*
* The 2021/2022 permit asks permit holders to select an annual theme and to have that topic be the primary emphasis in newsletters, emails, social media, etc.
* Link to vlawmo.org/residents/water-stewardship to direct viewers to more tips and info.

Public participation: MCM#2

* Convey any resources or encouragement for residents to volunteer to conduct trash pick-ups or public raingarden maintenance events and what support public works is able to offer.
  + VLAWMO adopt-a-raingarden has materials, instructions, and other resources for community groups such as scouts, churches, and school groups to volunteer in this capacity. Link to or guide residents to vlawmo.org/get-involved.
* Convey or link to Adopt-a-drian.org. Residents can adopt-a-stormdrain and join this metro-wide effort to clean stormdrains and track the amount of debris that volunteers collect.
  + Municipalities that join adopt-a-drain/watershed partners as a member receive convenient reports that document the adopt-a-drain results within the City/Township, and this can be directly plugged into a SWPPP report.
* Link to watersheds within municipal boundaries
  + Convey and/or briefly describe cost-share programs offered for building raingardens and other stormwater best management practices (more info available, PDF brochures in digital and hardcopy)
    - Vlawmo.org/grants
  + Briefly describe what a watershed is, how to find what watershed you’re home or business is located in, and encourage subscribing to the watershed newsletters/e-newsletters.
    - This basic watershed education is best suited for the first part, or the top of a web page related to water resources. All other sections described here can vary in their presentation depending on City/Township staff preference.
    - Reference VLAWMO.org/about for phrasing and information – help is always available from VLAWMO staff.

Illicit Discharge: MCM #3

* Define what illicit discharge is and why it matters
  + *“The City/Township’s stormwater system is designed to transport stormwater (rain and melting snow) to the nearest lake, stream, or wetland. Any waste or pollution that enters the storm sewer system will flow directly to the nearest waterbody without treatment and may cause serious environmental damage. Any discharge into a stormdrain, ditch, river, stream, wetland, or waterbody that is not composed entirely of stormwater is called an illicit discharge and is illegal.”*
* Display a phone number and/or email address to contact for reporting. Some municipalities create an online form through a website and program it to automatically go to the person who’s assigned the task to inspect or log reports.
* Describe what the City/Township does:
  + *“Through its Stormwater Ordinance the City/Township is authorized to regulate illicit discharge entering the City’s storm drainage system by any user. City/Township staff annually inspect the stormwater systems to check for illicit discharges or other problems. The ordinance contains enforcement provisions such as fines or possibly criminal action that the City/Township can take in the event an illicit discharge occurs.”*
* Provide a brief list on how the public can help and participate
  + *Be alert! Report any suspicious discharges using the online webform, or call the City's Engineering/Public Works Department at (###) ###-####. Clean water is everyone’s business and responsibility. Anonymity will be respected.*
  + *Clean up hazardous spills immediately.*
  + *Pick up litter and trash near storm drains. (Link to Adopt-a-Drain.org)*
  + *Clean up pet waste and dispose in trash.*
  + *Vegetate bare soil to reduce soil erosion.*
  + *Do not blow leaves, grass clippings, or mulch into the street. Sweep them off of pavement if they do land there.*
  + *Recycle oil, antifreeze, paint, paint thinners, solvents or batteries at a Ramsey/Anoka County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection site. (link to County website/phone line).*
  + *“Only rain down the drain”*
* Help the public build skills to detect illicit discharge and feel comfortable calling to report it.
  + “*It’s easy to be an illicit discharge detective and help protect our community’s valuable water resources. Watch for:* 
    - *Residues, stains, odors, or unusual damage around stormdrains.*
    - *Sediment running off of a construction site.*
    - *Fowl smells or unnatural colors gathered around storm outputs.*
    - *Water flowing in roadside ditches or into stormdrains when it hasn’t rained.*
    - *Pipes or hoses directed into stormdrains or ditches.*
    - *Pipes that bypass sanitary connections or septic drain fields that produce a direct discharge to a waterbody.*
    - *Piles of debris or trash in ditches, ponds, lakes, or wetlands.*
    - *Spotting someone in the act. Kindly inform them that the drain leads to a waterbody. Many times people just aren’t aware.”*

Conveying the City/Township SWPPP: MCM #6

* Introduction: Connect City/Township surface water pollution prevention program (SWPPP) to public education and participation.
  + *“A significant component of the \_\_\_\_\_ Surface Water Protection Program involves public education and participation to keep contaminants out of stormwater, lakes, streams and wetlands. The public is a key partner in making the City/Township plan a success to keep local water healthy for long-term human and wildlife uses.”*
* Include links/PDFs to the most recent SWPPP report and plan
* Convey when the required annual SWPPP public meeting occurs: Either a routine day/month of the year, or a specific upcoming date.
* Update website and City/Township stormwater code and ordinance language:
  + Change “sanitary sewer” to either **municipal storm sewer, storm sewer system, stormdrain system, stormwater system,** or **municipal stormdrain system**. There isn’t a standard phrase that is demanded by the MPCA, and the wide variety of acceptable terms that are currently being used make standardization of terms difficult. The key is pairing “sewer” with “storm” to distinguish it from a sanitary sewer system.
  + “Sewer” was formerly broadly used in the 80’s and 90’s and caused confusion between different types of infrastructure. Similarly, “Sanitary sewer” has been used in the wrong circumstances, leading many to think that stormdrains are a sanitary sewer system that goes to a treatment plant, when this is not the case. Reserve “sanitary” sewer for wastewater that connects to an actual treatment plant, such as household sewage, commercial carwashes, in-home/business/school drains, etc. Stormdrains
  + For education purposes, the Twin Cities Watershed Partners recommends to error on using the phrase “stormdrain” or “stormdrain system” for outward communications when referring to the MS4, opposed to “sewer.”
* **Internal illicit discharge training:** The SWPPP report includes mentions of public works, police, fire departments, and parks staff, and recommends additional staff, as within the realm of “field staff” to be trained and educated on Illicit Discharge. VLAWMO flyers and infographics can double as internal training materials, and additional powerpoint presentations are available by request. VLAWMO staff are available for providing these presentations.