SWPPP Tips: February, 2022

Streamlining your MS4 program

*Tips organized by slide number*

**4)** The SWPPP will ask for “behavior change.” These materials can be of use in measuring and estimating behavior change. This is a difficult thing to measure, but with a tangible tool, things like “number of door hangers hanged” or “number of mailings”, especially “conversations with residents” focused on these materials are valid ways to get at a behavior change.

**5)** The SWPPP will ask for “annual input.” Input can be focused on these documents, or incorporated into the annual meeting. This may provide bite-sized chunks for community input rather than asking residents to broadly provide input and feedback on the program in its entirety. Various staff from any part of the MS4 web of activity would need to capture this input and send it to the person who is conducting the annual meeting or the SWPPP report form. These materials are also the foundation for the SWPPP requirement to “design an education program.”

**7)** “Annual input” continued. Smart salting, IDDE, and pet waste are the core 3 messages that the SWPPP will ask about, requiring tangible examples and efforts to be documented on teach topic. The SWPPP will also ask for an “annual theme” – the MS4 permit holder is to select one of these (there is no wrong answer for which to do first). Using VLAWMO’s tools it can be easy to select a theme and rotate between them for the duration of this MS4 permit cycle (until 2025).

**8)** The SWPPP will ask you to “describe your IDDE program.” The VLAWMO IDDE educational PDF can be an integral part of this description: Where was it posted, how was it used, when was it dispersed and why, etc. Note these things and anyone who helps distribute education about IDDE relays this insight for the SWPPP description.

**9)** The SWPPP will ask you to “design an education program.” JPA communities with VLAWMO don’t have to start from scratch. The Watershed Care Calendar (every first of the month March–Nov) and all the other materials are the foundations for your MS4 program and can be listed as such in the SWPPP report. As a permit holder, Cities and Townships will need to describe what and how they used from the array of VLAWMO materials, as well as any other tools and activities conducted independently or with other contractors (engineering contractors, etc.).

The SWPPP will also ask for “2 other topics” beyond the core pet waste, smart salting, and IDDE topics. These include other related topics such as irrigation, yard care, raingardens, or other things like erosion control. The VLAWMO web calendar offers ample material to cover these additional topics on a consistent, seasonal basis. To take advantage of this resource an MS4 permit holder would have to glean from the web calendar and distribute the information on some sort of consistent basis. This can be on social media, the city/township website, other city web calendars, bulletin boards, social media, or newsletter. The options are many! VLAWMO will be using a general theme of “planning is half the battle” when presenting this calendar content to the public, and invites VLAWMO community members to do the same when supporting the effort.

“Annual theme” continued: The VLAWMO web calendar is set up for pet waste to be an isolated, consistent theme. Check the pet waste tidbit of the month and distribute that regularly to elevate it into a theme presented to the public.

**10)** The SWPPP requires an “annual meeting.” To update and inform the public of MS4 activities. Alternative titles for this meeting such as “water quality protection for safe surface waters” can serve as ways to encourage public participation and interest. If the annual meeting receives attendance and questions, these are valuable insights that support the “annual input” requirement.

**13)** The SWPPP will ask about “procedures and frequency for staff training” as a part of Minimum Control Measure #6. VLAWMO recommends that training be attended by a variety of staff across disciplines and roles, from commissions to front desk to public works. Within public works, the best practice is to maintain certifications for the entire staff so that strategies and conversations can remain active as a team effort. This allows for communication and understanding across the needs of the MS4 permit, and in the long run, expedites the puzzles and blockages that can arise in MS4 implementation. The staff completing the SWPPP report will need to keep a record for who has attended what training. The description of procedure and frequency can be based on your availability and time frequency, and training links are available from the vlawmo.org/agencies website under “MS4 support.” These apply to smart salting, turf maintenance best practices. More specialized trainings more relevant to public works staff include erosion control and stormwater BMP (stormpond, raingarden) inspection.