

# Stormwater Program Review

## Focus Group Notes

Name: Lisa Thorvig (presenter & host) Edwin Balcos (facilitator); Dale Thompson, (listener, themer); Darryl Weakley (note taker)

Date: 9/26/07

Time: 1:30 – 3:30

Location: MPCA – Marshall Regional Office

Attendees:

Scott Ledeboer - city of Willmar

Larry Hansen - DNR, CO

Jan Voit - Heron Lake WD

Brian Green - Redwood Co.

Loren Engelley - Kandiyohi Co.

John Biren - Lyon Co.

Scot Leddy - Banner Assoc. Inc.

Steve Ascher - Schwans Global Supply Chain

John Paulson - city of Hutchinson

Shane Waterman - city of Marshall

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\*Note taker: Please write down common themes that you hear. We don't want you to transcribe the conversation.

1. React to this vision statement about stormwater management. It is apparent from the statement it will take all of our efforts to accomplish.
  - How can a regulator do anything with a fixed volume and you have a heavy rain
  - How can you improve when someone else is dictating to you what can you improve
  - Prevent deterioration of quality; concern is after its hits the ground, rain pretty clean
2. As you consider stormwater management in Minnesota, what is going well that you wouldn't want to change/lose?
  - Education probably biggest component at the city level
  - DNR agrees, sees it daily in job. People don't get it or want to deal with it unless its explained to them
  - People like "opendoor" policy freedom to choose what they want to do
  - DNR regs and PCA regs in the area of shoreland development have been good
  - Need to go to somebody to find out what they need to do, DNR has been doing good in this area
  - P2 may have a place here, get management closer to the source of the problem
  - Construction of Wal-Mart in Willmar went very well, went well because Wal-Mart has been tagged by EPA

- MPCA having enforcement helps make people aware
  - Enforce areas of smaller than 1ac.
  - Redwood county – enforcement gets more attention than the education
  - Discussion on what authorities DNR has for actions that are not related to shoreland or wetland. No other Stormwater related actions can they write tickets on
  - Having locals as a resource to go to. Engineers like things defined, that's what's good about the permitting process.
3. What currently is not working the way you would like or what issues/opportunities do you see?
- Working around them during the construction process to preserve them. Area has shortage of wetlands. Want to see wetlands come back.
  - Govt programs to help restore may work
  - Mitigation too easy, need to do more restoration.
  - CRP or RIM not available for mitigation
  - Need to get program started so others can see benefit
  - Small retention ponds have worked in development areas, timeframe tends to be long, and perception developer got by with something.
  - Double standards; rules not uniformly applied, comes from lack of enforcement
  - Ag and farm programs
  - PCA could do some local training, a step in the right direction to help eliminate some of the inconsistencies.
  - Watershed district has know enforcement authority
  - Tillage practices create major sediment
  - Recreational tiling has created problems
  - AG has been left out of the picture
  - Storm ponds creating P problems and mosquito issues
  - Educate people on problems
  - Disconnect between NPDES program and Stormwater management
  - Enforcement part is not there, not enough people to cover area
  - Minnesota ahead of other states in their enforcement effort
  - Environment magazine good source of information, not hitting the target audience
  - Target contractor associations, they seem to get the tickets, and they didn't know
  - Rules and rule changes need to be made more available
  - People don't care until it affects them
  - Contractor should be required to be certified for erosion/sediment control
  - CREP and have had more effect on Stormwater than any enforcement
4. What didn't we ask you that you want to tell us? (What one thing to leave us with?)
- Required Certification for contractors
  - Education of cities and counties

- Can't rely on state for everything, education is key, invite contractors in for a meeting and tell them what they needed to do Work at local level rather than from the top down
- Salt on roadways, where is PCA going with this
- Not fair playing field due to political issues, big business pressure
- Need to take small steps to work with local people, help them understand the rules
- Redevelop storm sewer program for city. Going to need to pay more money to get programs
- Cleaning up mess we have, storm water not point source but what comes from the sky
- Need to look at P2 applied to Stormwater
- Educating the public

Post meeting comments:

Attended ag meetings and numbers flip flopped, ag feels more enforcement on cities and counties needed.