

# Stormwater Program Review

## Focus Group Notes

Name: Brian Livingston (host); Ken Moon (presenter); Kris Van Amber (facilitator); Dale Thompson, Ken Moon (listener, themer); Mary Lynn (note taker)

Date: 9/25/07

Time: 1:30 – 3:30

Location: MPCA, St Paul

Attendees:

Craig Jochum – City of East Bethel

Jerry Spetzman – Chisago County

Art Pearsons - MDH

Judy Sventek –Met Council

Shane Missaghi – U of M Extension

Peder Otherson – DNR Shoreland

Jack Frost – Met Council

Nick Tiedeken - MNDOT

Dave Wierens

Gary Oberts

Andrea Hendrickson

\*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.
  - What is reasonable amount?
  - Pre v. post development conditions?
  - Need to define Stormwater; runoff from ag land included?
  - Is it in-sinc with nondegradation policy?
  - Provides flexibility
  - Not possible for existing, maybe with future development
  - Implies treatment (to be of high quality)
  - Cost
  - Receiving waters are identified
2. As you consider stormwater management in Minnesota, what is going well that you wouldn't want to change/lose?

- MPCA shift from command/control to partnerships
  - Other agencies have Stormwater on their agenda; NEMO, DNR,...
  - Phase II has raised awareness of Stormwater issues
  - Awareness, partnerships have grown (JPA – construction)
  - Stormwater Manual great asset, keep updating
3. What currently is not working the way you would like or what issues/opportunities do you see?
- Disconnect between federal mandate and state regulations (i.e. SWPPPs and state water plans). State does not look at bigger picture (i.e. ag runoff). Need more flexibility.
  - Outside metro, situation is different for awareness of urban Stormwater runoff, not as advanced.
  - Bring awareness into existing programs; i.e. drinking water
  - Shoreland management and development, need more emphasis on infiltration
  - MPCA should put more emphasis on and resources into enforcement.
  - Need to move LID from infancy into practice
  - Permitting – not enough staff to do job well. Need different way - partnerships, watershed based approach.
  - Need MPCA to get more involved in review of local water plans; coordinated review effort between local plans, TMDLs, impaired waters, SWPPPs
  - Local water plans could do better what SWPPPs are supposed to do (i.e. BMPs, too cookie cutter). Need better integration. SWPPP mandate not working.
  - What is MPCA mission in Stormwater? With limited resources; may need to focus on enforcement.
  - Local enforcement of ordinances. Local oversight and accountability instead of command/control at state level.
  - Impaired waters list – need to prioritize. Not all water bodies are highest priority. Need classification system. Projects that are ready to go, get the money. Should consider what water body is used for.
  - Tiered approach to water quality standards.
  - No MPCA presence for <10,000 communities.
  - Ordinance for construction is weak in small community, difficult to adopt on their own; need county wide or state to require.
  - Impervious surfaces – set threshold for development, through local ordinance.
  - Match growth with impervious.
  - Local officials have to be able to enforce their own requirements, not high priority. Convince municipalities good plans, SWPPPs, are to their benefit.
  - Locals have to “own” their programs; they do not see value of protecting their waters.
  - Annual meeting for MS4s; MPCA presence was helpful/productive.
  - With staff changes, consistency is difficult; MPCA re-organizes more than most.
  - Technical assistance for permitting.
  - DNR public water permits - area hydrologists have flexibility in interpreting rules; more site specific.
  - MPCA staff rarely at watershed meetings (outside Agency).

- Link ordinances to water plans.
  - SWPPP goals are set too low, are minimum.
  - Link Stormwater mission to CWA.
  - Industrial Stormwater, no oversight at local level. What is going on with ISW?
4. What didn't we ask you that you want to tell us? (What one thing to leave us with?)
- Not all waters are the same.
  - Integration of state program with local program, not enough.
  - Need local ownership, local buy-in.
  - Provide local services so that they can enforce rules.
  - No high quality of Stormwater if we do not deal with agricultural stormwater runoff.
  - Recognize waters used for drinking water; drinking water stds – water quality stds.
  - Average person does not have strong connection with Stormwater runoff.
  - Outside metro, municipalities have strong connection with other MPCA programs, but not with Stormwater program.
  - Do not muddle state requirements with local plans.