

Stormwater Steering Committee

May 18, 2006

MPCA Offices

Attendees: Randy Neprash, Andy Erickson, Joel Schilling, Don Jakes, Ron Struss, Jason Moeckel, Gary Pulford, Doug Thomas, Randy Ellingboe, Art Persons, Dave Weirens, Judy Sventek, Brian Livingston, Steve Klein, Anne Gelbmann, Cliff Aichinger, Lori Haak, Scott Anderson, Doug Snyder, Mike Findorff, Jay Riggs, Steve Colvin, Erik Silvola, Keith Hanson, Steve Pedersen, Bruce Wilson, Nancy Read, Tamara Cameron, Trevor Russell, Mary Lynn, Mark Schmitt, Steve Giddings, John Hensel, Jack Frost, Nick Tiedeken, Dale Thompson, John Chapman, John Jaschke, Paul Smith, Richard Andre, Gretchen Sabel

Work Group Reports:

Industrial – Erik Silvola recapped the new structure for this workgroup. MPCA will chair the group, and representatives from the Minnesota Chamber and an environmental group will co-vice-chair. Erik Silvola will be the Chamber rep and Janette Brimmer has expressed interest in serving this role for an environmental group. Mark Schmitt will be the PCA rep to the group until new PCA staffer is on board – Steve Giddings will be hiring this person soon. Work of this committee starts now. Those interested in participating in the work of this group should contact Gretchen Sabel.

Education – Ron Struss reported that the first meeting was held on April 28 in Sartell. Attendance was good and much was accomplished: a common definition of “stormwater education” was agreed to and the group developed an inventory of stormwater education activities ongoing around Minnesota. Definition of “stormwater education” – *“Preventing stormwater pollution by changing behavior of all who live, work and play in Minnesota, through increasing awareness, understanding and skills, and providing motivation and encouragement to take action.”* Next steps: Meeting again second week of June to identify and prioritize key educational audiences and unmet educational needs. Participation from someone interested in Industrial issues was sought – Keith Hanson said that the Chamber would find someone to participate.

Manual – Judy Sventek distributed a revised organizational form for this workgroup. The list of participants is those who said they wanted to be part of the workgroup; several dropped off from the first round. Anyone else interested in joining the group should contact Brian Livingston. Judy passed out a list of comments that were received and the Work Group’s recommended resolution for each. A resolution was approved (motion Sventek, second Hanson) to accept this recommendation. Next meeting of this group will be in October. Brian Livingston has prepared a survey that all who registered as manual owners will be invited to fill out; this will go out with the notice of revisions.

Monitoring and Research – this group is still not active, but Bruce Wilson and Andy Ericson reported on work being done. Three projects are ongoing. Work in Three Rivers Parks District has been written up and is in peer review. This would be interesting information to share with the SSC in the future, possibly at a brown bag before the next

meeting. Trout stream thermal impacts work is being conducted at St. Anthony Falls lab. The third project is development of the Assessment Protocol for Stormwater Best Management Practices – Andy Erickson provided an update on this project, attached to these meeting notes. The protocol outline has been set and authors for the 13 chapters are at work developing drafts.

Watershed Approach Work Group

Doug Thomas presented the work of this group to date. A recommended narrowing of the list of regulatory options was presented to the SSC, see attached “Piloting Integrated Watershed-based NPDES Stormwater Permitting and Watershed Management Planning in Minnesota”. However, a problem with this project has arisen. Last week, representatives from the League of Minnesota Cities met with Doug and expressed concerns that the project may; 1) support an expansion of powers and authorities of watershed districts over cities, 2) increase requirements imposed on cities by watershed districts, and 3) result in unintended consequences. BWSR is disturbed by these concerns, and proposes to not proceed with the project if and until these concerns are resolved. If this issue is not resolved soon grant money may be compromised and contributors may not wish to proceed if compromises change the scope of work.

A vigorous discussion ensued for the next half hour. Strong support for the project was voiced by many participants, and a clear desire expressed that it proceed. While there may be peril in continuing the project, there is also peril in not moving ahead. A representative from a metro-area city stated that the problem may be more one of non-information and mis-information, and that more information may help to alleviate concerns. To help resolve this, the SSC offered to help BWSR resolve the concerns. Several meetings will be set up in June to examine the concerns in more detail and determine whether they can be alleviated to an extent that proceeding with the project is useful and feasible. First will be a small group to begin the work, then a broader group will be convened to help the process along. A facilitator from DNR may be available to help the group work.

Stormwater Pollution Prevention Acceleration at MPCA

Gary Pulford described efforts at MPCA to cobble together additional staff time to work in stormwater quality improvement. The goal is to promote low impact development and other conservation tools to protect and restore water quality. The merger of MPCA and OEA has broadened the opportunities for MPCA work in this arena, and 6-8 FTE of staff time will be dedicated to this effort. The new MS4 permit opens the door to a more clear linkage between regulatory requirements and low impact development, primarily through the requirement that 30 cities develop plans for reducing their total stormwater pollutant loading to 1988 levels. Randy Neprash shared his ideas for how this linkage can occur. Anne Gelbmann will be project coordinator. She can be reached at 651-215-0292 or anne.gelbmann@pca.state.mn.us. Comments on the planned strategies were shared by SSC participants, additional comments should be directed to Anne. This work is to begin July 1, comments before June 15 will be timely.

Possible Changes in MPCA Enforcement Authority

Mark Schmitt shared his concerns with MPCA stormwater enforcement. Recent aerial surveillance has shown sites where significant environmental degradation has occurred even though the work was being done under permit and by persons who've gone through the University's sediment and erosion control certification program. Something needs to be done to get the attention of the regulated community and increase compliance. Those who have ideas on how to approach this issue should either call Mark Schmitt at 651-297-8574 or email Brian Livingston at brian.livingston@pca.state.mn.us .

Possible Changes in MPCA Fees for Stormwater

Gretchen Sabel described a project she's part of that is identifying options for filling the gap in funding for water programs. The Environmental Fund receives revenue from MPCA permits and the solid waste tax. This fund now has a gap between what is coming in and what is needed. Several options are being examined for increasing revenue, including increases in stormwater permit fees. Those interested in advising MPCA on this topic should contact Gretchen – she will set up two meetings in June for this work. She can be contacted at 651-296-7773 or gretchen.sabel@pca.state.mn.us .

Meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm.

Attachments:

Education Workgroup Report

Manual Workgroup Organizational Form, list of Manual comments, resolution

Update on Protocol project

Watershed recommendation

Pollution Prevention Strategies