

Section 1 Introduction

Background

Since the passage of the Clean Water Act (CWA), the quality of our Nation's waters has improved dramatically. Despite this progress, however, degraded water bodies still exist. According to the 1996 National Water Quality Inventory (Inventory), a biennial summary of State surveys of water quality, approximately 40 percent of surveyed U.S. water bodies are still impaired by pollution and do not meet water quality standards. A leading source of this impairment is polluted runoff. In fact, according to the Inventory, 13 percent of impaired rivers, 21 percent of impaired lake acres and 45 percent of impaired estuaries are affected by urban/suburban storm water runoff and 6 percent of impaired rivers, 11 percent of impaired lake acres and 11 percent of impaired estuaries are affected by construction site discharges.

In 1972, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (also referred to as the Clean Water Act [CWA]) was amended to provide that the discharge of pollutants to waters of the United States from any point source is unlawful unless the discharge is in compliance with a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The 1987 amendments to the CWA added §402(p), which established a framework for regulating certain storm water discharges under the NPDES Program.

Phase I of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) storm water program was promulgated in 1990 under the CWA. Phase I relies on National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit coverage to address storm water runoff from: (1) "medium" and "large" municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) generally serving populations of 100,000 or greater, (2) construction activity disturbing 5 acres of land or greater, and (3) ten categories of industrial activity.

On December 8, 1999, EPA promulgated regulations known as the Storm Water Phase II Final Rule. The Phase II program expanded the Phase I program by requiring additional operators of MS4s in urbanized areas and operators of small construction sites, through the use of NPDES permits, to implement programs and practices to control polluted storm water runoff.

Purpose of the Storm Water Management Program

The purpose of the Monterey Regional Storm Water Management Program (MRSWMP) is to implement and enforce a series of management practices, referred to herein as "Best Management Practices" (BMPs). These BMPs are designed to reduce the discharge of pollutants from the municipal separate storm sewer systems to the "maximum extent practicable," to protect water quality, and to satisfy the appropriate water quality requirements of the Clean Water Act. The achievement of these objectives will be gauged using a series of

Measurable Goals, which also are contained in the MRSWMP.

The BMPs are grouped under the following six “Minimum Control Measures”, which are required under the Phase II regulations:

1. Public Education and Outreach
2. Public Participation/Involvement
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
4. Construction Site Runoff Control
5. Post-Construction Runoff Control
6. Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping

Content of the Monterey Regional Storm Water Management Program

The MRSWMP describes the organizational framework under which the participating entities will work together to accomplish the objectives of the Program. It contains a description, and map, of the areas to be covered by the NPDES permit for which the Program was prepared. It also describes how the BMPs and Measurable Goals will be applied and enforced within the jurisdictional boundaries of each of the participating entities.

The heart of the MRSWMP is the listing of BMPs and Measurable Goals. This list was developed by the participating entities, using the very comprehensive list of potential BMPs and Measurable Goals promulgated by EPA. The MRSWMP list contains those BMPs and Measurable Goals that the participants believe will be most useful and effective in reducing the discharge of pollutants from storm sewer systems within the particular geographic area covered by this permit.

The participating entities also used the Model Urban Runoff Program (MURP) which was completed in July of 1998. MURP is a comprehensive how-to guide developed for local governments to address the issues of polluted runoff in the urban environment. The MURP provides options to help small municipalities develop their own urban runoff programs for the Phase II process. The MURP was prepared by the City of Monterey, City of Santa Cruz, MBNMS, California Coastal Commission, Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), Woodward-Clyde Consultants, and the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board with money from a State 319 (h) grant. Many other local municipal agencies acted as peer reviewers throughout the development of the MURP through semi-annual meetings of the AMBAG Stormwater Task Force, now known as the Monterey Bay Stormwater Information Exchange.