

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Tennessee: Tennessee Construction Storm Water Excellence Initiative

Project Background:

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) identified siltation (sedimentation) as the most frequently cited cause of waterbody impairment within the boundaries of many of the state's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s), impacting over 5,800 miles of streams and rivers. Excessive sediment loading from storm water runoff due to clearing, grading, and excavating at construction sites is a major ecosystem stressor, and has adversely impacted municipal stream biota, either directly or through changes to physical habitat. One of the most effective and efficient ways to prevent the expansion of water quality impairment related to construction is through the establishment of criteria to qualify MS4s as Qualifying Local Programs (QLP) and determine incentives for MS4s to seek qualification.

TDEC has received a US EPA State Innovation Grant to develop and implement the Tennessee Construction Storm Water Excellence Initiative. The initiative encourages MS4s, through incentives and a formal recognition and awards program, to become QLPs. The QLP option will ensure the improvement of water quality through an efficient implementation of the Construction General Permit (CGP).

Project Description:

TDEC is implementing a Construction Storm Water Excellence Initiative to achieve improved environmental compliance, focusing on outcomes (improved water quality and administrative efficiency) over traditional regulatory outputs (number of inspections and permit issued) to measure performance. The goals of the Initiative are to improve water quality by assisting the construction community to comply with the CGP and encourage strong MS4 sediment and erosion control program elements; provide incentives and a formal excellence recognition and awards program for members; and eliminate duplication of the effort between the MS4s and TDEC.

TDEC's objective is to link the attainment of QLP status to include additional (e.g., beyond those measures required in the existing permit) proactive and remedial measures to control the discharge of sediment into impaired waterbodies, implementation of provisions of approved sediment Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), and description of methods to evaluate whether storm water controls are adequate to meet the requirements of approved TMDLs.

TDEC has partnered with the University of Tennessee, Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) to fulfill the tasks, milestone, and outputs identified in the Construction Storm Water Excellence Initiative.

Project Update:

Project start date: October 1, 2007

As of June 5, 2008, TDEC and MTAS have:

- Conducted stormwater group preliminary organization meetings to determine key MS4's for preliminary solicitation.
- Conducted five regional MS4 kick-off meetings for the proposed Tennessee Storm Water Association during March and April 2008 in Nashville (Middle), Chattanooga (Southeast), Knoxville (East), Johnson City (Northeast), and Memphis (West). The QLP Program was discussed and received with enthusiasm and interest by the MS4s.
- Regularly scheduled regional meetings have been initiated and Chairs and Co-Chairs from each regional group designated. Each regional chapter has also identified representatives to serve on the stakeholder committee for criteria development on the Qualified Local Program.
- An annual statewide conference for the Tennessee Storm Water Association has been scheduled in conjunction with the Tennessee Chapter of the American Public Works Association (TCAPWA), and will be held October 17 - October 20, 2008, in Memphis, Tennessee.

- Additional potential stakeholders were identified for committee membership and have been contacted. Follow up letters formally requesting their participation was mailed the week of June 2, 2008. These groups include, but are not limited to, the Home Builders Association, the General Contractor's Association, the Tennessee Association of Planners, Tennessee Society of Professional Engineers, the Tennessee Water Groups, Tennessee State and Local Planning Office, the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce, the Tennessee Department of Transportation, and the TCAPWA.
- Efforts to incorporate the Tennessee Storm Water Association have been initiated.

The work will take four years to complete.

Connection to EPA's Goals

This project supports two of EPA's strategic goals. Excessive sediment loading from land disturbance and construction activities in MS4s is a major ecosystem stressor, and has adversely impacted water quality in many waterbodies in Tennessee. It is fully expected that the implementation of the QLP option by MS4s will result in the improvement of water quality in the long term due to the efficient implementation of the CGP. Therefore, this project supports EPA's Goal 2 – Clean and Safe Water.

It also supports Goal 5 – Compliance and Environmental Stewardship since it will include the development and implementation of incentives and excellence recognition for MS4s that pursue the qualifying status.

For more specific information on the Tennessee State Innovation Grant, please visit TDEC's Construction Storm Water Excellence Initiative website at (<http://www.epa.gov/NCEI/stategrants/tennessee.htm>) or contact one of the individuals below:

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