

MCM 1 Plan and Standard Operating Procedure

Public Education and Outreach

City of Brainerd
501 Laurel Street, Brainerd, MN 56401

PLAN MANAGER: City Engineer

UPDATED: 04/15/2021

I. Introduction

The City of Brainerd owns and operates an MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System). Under the MS4 General Permit (MS4 Permit), the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency requires that the City develop a plan with written procedures for the purpose of educating the public on stormwater issues and management. All implementation of elements of this plan needs to be done in coordination with a review of the current MS4 General Permit requirements. Key elements of this documents are provided herein.

An educated and informed community can not only prevent pollution in stormwater, but also identify and report illicit discharges or construction activities that may negatively affect stormwater. Therefore, Minimum Control Measure (MCM) 1 of the MS4 General Permit requires every MS4 permittee to run an education and outreach program to teach their community about the impacts of stormwater discharge. The education and outreach program should foster proper stormwater management behaviors.

The City of Brainerd's Storm Sewer Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) Minimum Control Measure (MCM) 1 addresses public education and outreach. The following plan determines the education focus for the current permit cycle and the programs and tools to be implemented in educating the public about their roles in the protection, preservation, and management of water resources.

The City must conduct an annual assessment of the public education program to evaluate program compliance, the status of achieving their measurable requirements in the MS4 General Permit and determine how the program might be improved. Measurable requirements are activities that must be documented or tracked as applicable to the MCM (e.g., education and outreach efforts, implementation of written plans, etc.). The City must perform the annual assessment prior to completion of each annual report and document any modifications made to the program because of the annual assessment.

II. Target Audience

Educational needs are dependent on the target audience. Each target audience plays a different role in the protection, preservation, and management of water resources. Thus, programs and tools are tailored to different target audiences. This plan lays out the priority area education programs and tools according to the target audiences listed below.

- **Local Officials & Decision makers:** Appointed/elected officials such as city councils and planning commissions.
- **Staff:** Planners, engineers, and public works staff.

- **The Public:** Residents, businesses, commercial facilities, institutions, and local organizations. Consideration will be given to low-income residents, people of color, and non-native English-speaking residents.

III. Topic Areas/Issues of Concern

The City realizes the importance of educating local officials, City staff and the public on the needs, benefits, and plan for managing stormwater. In general, the vast majority of people do not fully understand the effects of untreated and unregulated stormwater runoff on the environmental, economic and social values provided to us all by our water resources. Many also do not understand that there are regulations in place to protect those values or that the City is responsible for managing stormwater. To help guide public education and outreach, the following topics will be referenced to develop content for this outreach plan (additional topics should be considered as needed during the annual Education and Outreach Plan annual review):

- Stormwater 101 – An introduction to what stormwater is, how it adversely affects our water resources, who is responsible for its management, how the public can get involved.
- Pollutants of Concern and why they are important to manage.
- Types of structural stormwater best management practices and where they are used.
- Good housekeeping as a means of pollution prevention.
- Illicit discharge detection identification and reporting tools/contacts.
- Impaired waters and the plan to meet waste load allocations.
- Stormwater Utility Fee: What is it? Why do we have it? How are rates determined? How is the money spent?
- City Ordinances and Permits 101 – An overview of City regulations and permits related to stormwater and who they affect.

In all cases, the City will regularly update the Stormwater website with content and provide links to the page in each of its distributed materials.

IV. Documentation

The City must document the following information related to each Public Education and Outreach effort:

- A description of all specific stormwater-related issues identified by the permittee related to items identified in **VII** below.
- Quantities and descriptions of educational materials distributed, including dates distributed.
- Target Audience category (as defined in **II**, above).
- Estimated audience (e.g., number of participants, viewers, readers, listeners, etc.) for each completed education and outreach activity.

The City will record all public comments and City responses as related to this MCM (see **VI**, below).

V. Partnerships

The City will coordinate its Public Education and Outreach Plan implementation with the following entities:

- Crow Wing County Soil and Water Conservation District

VI. Responding to Public Comments

The appropriate City staff will provide a response to any comments received regarding the Public Education and Outreach Plan and overall SWPPP within three business days, if possible, given the nature of the comment. The public comment and City response will be documented in the SWPPP binder or database of the latest or most applicable program plan or annual report.

VII. Plan Implementation Timeline

a. Twice per Year

- i. During the permit term, the permittee must distribute educational materials or equivalent outreach focused on at least two (2) specifically selected stormwater-related issues of high priority to the permittee (e.g., specific TMDL reduction targets, changing local business practices, promoting adoption of residential BMPs, lake improvements through lake associations, household chemicals, yard waste, etc.). The topics must be different from those described here-in for IDDE, salt use and pet waste management. The City will develop or solicit from outside entities stormwater articles for the City newsletter to inform private residents and businesses about stormwater issues to meet this goal. The newsletter may also be used more frequently to distribute stormwater topics not identified as high priority on a more frequent basis.

b. Annually

- i. At least once each calendar year, the City must distribute educational materials or equivalent outreach focused on illicit discharge recognition and reporting illicit discharges to the permittee.
- ii. At least once each calendar year, the City must distribute educational materials or equivalent outreach to residents, businesses, commercial facilities, and institutions, focused on the following:
 1. Impacts of deicing salt use on receiving waters.
 2. Methods to reduce deicing salt use.
 3. Proper storage of salt or other deicing materials.
- iii. At least once each calendar year, the City must distribute educational materials or equivalent outreach focused on pet waste. The educational materials or equivalent outreach must include information on the following:
 1. Impacts of pet waste on receiving waters.
 2. Proper management of pet waste.
 3. Any existing permittee regulatory mechanism(s) for pet waste.
- iv. The City staff will prepare a presentation to the City Council, or provide an update to the City Administrator, on an annual basis to explain the past progress towards implementing the SWPPP provisions and what is planned for the upcoming year. This presentation will be used as an opportunity to increase Council, and/or City Administrator, on awareness of storm water runoff issues and justify the importance of implementing the SWPPP provisions. The City will

cover issues relating to each of the six minimum control measures in the presentation.

- v. The City will conduct an annual public meeting (virtual presentation or website posting may be an option) to receive public opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the SWPPP program and serve as an opportunity to provide public awareness of stormwater runoff issues (*see* MCM 2 – Public Participation Plan).
- vi. The City of will conduct annual employee training for the public works staff to educated employees on how to prevent and reduce stormwater pollution from activities such as park and open space maintenance, and MS4 maintenance activities in general (*see* MCMs 3-6 Plans for details).

c. Ongoing

- i. City Website – Storm Water Page: The City will maintain a stormwater web page, which provides the audience with general information regarding the effects of polluted stormwater, prevention techniques, and resources for additional information. As a goal, the City will provide information on the website to address each of the six minimum control measures. Also, the City plans to post the approved SWPPP on the website for public viewing.
- ii. The City will accept phone calls and other correspondence to report illicit discharge, provide comments regarding the SWPPP, and report construction site sedimentation and erosion violations. All comments received will be routed to the appropriate staff person. Comments will be received will be routed to the appropriate staff person. Comments will be reviewed by City staff, SWPPP revisions will conducted as appropriate, and responses to each comment will be provided in the annual report. Also, the City will incorporate their existing complaint procedures and filing system to document calls.