

St. Clair County, Michigan



Public Education Plan Revised January 2025

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Application for Discharge of Stormwater to Surface Waters from a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System representing the following Watershed Partners and Nested Jurisdictions:

ST. CLAIR COUNTY

ST. CLAIR COUNTY'S NESTED JURISDICTIONS:

ALGONAC COMMUNITY SCHOOLS DISTRICT
PORT HURON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
EAST CHINA SCHOOL DISTRICT
MARYSVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISTRICT
ST. CLAIR COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
SCC REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY

NORTHEASTERN WATERSHED PARTNERS:

CITY OF MARINE CITY
CITY OF MARYSVILLE
CITY OF ST. CLAIR
CITY OF PORT HURON
CLYDE TOWNSHIP
EAST CHINA CHARTER TOWNSHIP
FORT GRATIOT CHARTER TOWNSHIP
KIMBALL TOWNSHIP
PORT HURON CHARTER TOWNSHIP

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I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Public Education Plan

This collaborative Public Education Plan (PEP) was developed to fulfill the public education requirements of the State of Michigan's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Application for Discharge of Stormwater to Surface Waters from a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). This PEP provides an outline of the actions St. Clair County (SCC), its nested jurisdictions and the permittees within the Northeastern Watersheds will take to inform the residents, businesses and officials of St. Clair County about their role in protecting water quality and preventing stormwater pollution in their community. This PEP outlines the ten public education topics that must be communicated, prioritizes them based on a procedure for assessing high-priority community-wide issues, and targets issues to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff.

The goal for this PEP is to promote, publicize and facilitate a watershed education program that encourages the public to reduce stormwater pollution to the greatest extent possible. The "public" is defined as all persons who potentially could affect the quality of stormwater discharges, including, but not limited to, residents, public employees, businesses, industries, construction contractors and developers.

This PEP was created by SCC, its nested jurisdictions, and the permittees of the Northeastern Watersheds (NEW) Advisory Group who are subject to the aforementioned NPDES stormwater regulations. These permittees will be referred to in the remainder of this document as the "NEW Partners".

Objectives

The following objectives were developed to guide implementation of the Best Management Practices (BMPs) outlined in this PEP:

- Raise awareness and knowledge among the residents of SCC on how their daily activities impact the watershed.
- Educate the public regarding the importance of watersheds as a significant natural resource and community asset by fostering stewardship and enthusiasm for the resource.
- Improve understanding of the impacts of individual and group behaviors on water quality.
- Increase the number of individuals, schools and other organizations participating in water education and stewardship activities.

II. COLLABORATION OF WATERSHED PARTNERS

In developing this PEP, SCC continues its cooperative partnerships with its nested jurisdictions and the NEW Partners, who agree that approaching stormwater education on a watershed and county-wide basis is both efficient and environmentally sound. The collaborative approach provides a consistent and effective mechanism for protecting water resources across the county in the most efficient manner.

Because this plan is collaborative, SCC, its nested jurisdictions and the NEW Partners are all responsible for ensuring its implementation. Currently SCC implements and provides leadership on the majority of the public education activities listed in this plan while its nested jurisdictions and the NEW Partners are responsible for financially supporting these activities, promoting and participating in them. The roles and financial arrangements between SCC, its nested jurisdictions and the NEW Partners are agreed upon annually at NEW Watershed Advisory Group meetings. Should the current roles or financial arrangements change, it is still the responsibility of this collaborative group to ensure that the activities outlined in this plan are implemented.

The following entities are committed to implementing this collaborative plan:

St. Clair County (SCC)

NEW Partners:

- Kimball Township
- Port Huron Charter Township
- East China Charter Township
- Fort Gratiot Charter Township
- Clyde Township
- City of Marine City
- City of Port Huron
- City of Marysville
- City of St. Clair

SCC's Nested Jurisdictions:

- Marysville Public School District
- Port Huron Area School District
- East China School District
- St. Clair County Community College
- St. Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency
- Algonac Community School District

III. REQUIRED PERMIT ELEMENTS

This PEP outlines the program to promote, publicize, and facilitate education for the purpose of encouraging the public to reduce the discharge of pollutants in stormwater to the maximum extent practicable. The PEP describes current and proposed BMPs that will be implemented to meet the minimum control measure required in the permit.

PEP Priority Topics

The public education topics A – J listed in the chart below are identified in the permit application. The procedure for identifying high-priority watershed-wide or targeted topics suited for collaborative public education efforts includes:

- A review of pertinent Watershed Management Plans including any established TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load: a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant allowed to enter a waterbody so that the waterbody will meet water quality standards for that particular pollutant), for waterbodies in each watershed
- A review of the effectiveness of PEP activities implemented prior to this permit cycle
- Topics identified by permittees at advisory group meetings prior to and throughout the permit cycle
- Discussion and input from permittees regarding potential public outreach opportunities, and existing and future programs

Code	PEP Topic	Priority Ranking
A	Promote public responsibility and stewardship in the watershed	High
B	Inform and educate the public about the connection of the MS4 to area waterbodies and the potential impacts discharges could have on surface waters of the state	High
C	Educate the public on illicit discharges and promote public reporting of illicit discharges and improper disposal of materials into the MS4	High
D	Promote preferred cleaning materials and procedures for car, pavement, and power washing	Low
E	Inform and educate the public on proper application and disposal of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers	Medium
F	Promote proper disposal practices for grass clippings, leaf litter, and animal wastes that may enter into the MS4	High
G	Identify and promote the availability, location and requirements of facilities for collection of and disposal of household hazardous wastes, travel trailer sanitary wastes, chemicals, yard wastes, and motor vehicle fluids	Medium
H	Inform and educate the public on proper septic system care and maintenance, and how to recognize system failure	High
I	Educate the public on, and promote the benefits of, green infrastructure and Low Impact Development	Low
J	Identify and educate commercial, industrial, and institutional entities likely to contribute pollutants to storm water runoff	Low

A measurable goal with a method of evaluation is included for each PEP activity. In addition, for topics A - J the PEP identifies:

- Target audience

- Key message
- Delivery mechanism
- Year and frequency of implementation
- Responsible party
- Evaluation process

IV. OVERALL EVALUATION

This PEP provides the procedure for evaluating and determining the effectiveness of the overall PEP. The procedure includes a method for assessing changes in public awareness and behavior resulting from the implementation of the PEP and the process for modifying the PEP to address ineffective implementation. This method for assessing changes in public awareness and behavior can be completed with surveys to monitor behavioral changes over time. These surveys will be done at public gatherings or through efforts partnering organizations. These surveys need not be statistically valid for use in evaluation of the program.

A variety of mechanisms are described in the “Evaluation” of each of the PEP’s individual activities. Evaluation of accumulated measures of the effectiveness of the PEP’s individual activities can be categorized in terms of output (i.e., effort or activity) that measures short-term goals and milestones. Examples of output measurements include tracking website hits or the number of literature pieces distributed to a target audience. When practicable, measurements of outcome (i.e. survey results that indicate actual behavior change) will be incorporated into progress reports. Such measures are expected to include public comment and feedback and level of participation in programs and events. These mechanisms can be useful in determining whether the education effort is reaching the audience; however, it is difficult to evaluate behavior change resulting from the education activity using these purely quantitative methods.

The final evaluation method to be used will be an ongoing process at the quarterly MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) Advisory Group meetings and members are encouraged to discuss the effectiveness of ongoing efforts and provide suggestions for improvements. If it is determined that a change is needed, the PEP will be revised to reflect the change and the updated on the progress report.

V. PROGRESS REPORT

By the date indicated on SCC and the NEW Partner’s permits, they will submit to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) a Progress Report on the implementation status of its permit and the progress of pollution prevention. This report will include documentation of PEP efforts, a summary of the evaluation of its effectiveness when appropriate (e.g. survey results, public comments received), and any proposed revisions or amendments.

VI. PROPOSED PUBLIC EDUCATION

The activities to be implemented as part of this PEP are summarized below. Activities will be completed by the responsible parties noted in each objective description. Timelines for implementation of proposed activities extend from (year one) when implementation of the PEP begins to (year five) when the permit expires.

(A) Promote public responsibility and stewardship in the applicant's watershed(s).

Activity: Promote watershed awareness at fairs and festivals, collaborate with partner organizations to maintain watershed signage

Priority: High

Target audience: General public, residents, public employees, visitors

Key message: "St. Clair Watershed, Ours to Protect."

Delivery mechanism: Fair and festival attendees, pedestrian traffic, Digital resource packet (distributed thought print, social media or website).



Year and frequency of implementation: Signs were replaced in partnership with Friends of the St. Clair River, spring of 2024. They will be maintained indefinitely. Fairs and festivals will be attended 2X per year throughout the permit cycle. One Digital Resource Packet will be distributed 1X per year during the permit cycle. The Digital Resource Packet's social media calendar will act as a timeline for postings. When social media is not available graphics can be printed and displayed in a prominent location.

Responsible party: SCC will attend the events, Nested Jurisdictions and NEW Partners will promote the event(s) through social media or printed signage displayed in a public location.

Evaluation: Document attendance of events and report reach/attendance and materials distributed via progress reports.

(B) Inform and educate the public about the connection of the MS4 to area waterbodies and the potential impacts discharges could have on surface waters of the state.

Activity: Promote Stormwater Education Menu

Priority: High

Target audience: Elementary school students, residents

Key message: Students in a watershed can use BMPs to reduce pollution within our waters.

Delivery mechanism: Presentations

Year and frequency of implementation: Continuous; a minimum of 10 programs will be presented annually throughout the permit cycle.

Responsible party: SCC will provide presentations to the following school districts: Algonac, East China, Saint Clair, Marysville and Port Huron will host the presentations.

Evaluation: A teacher survey will be completed at the end of the presentation.

(C) Educate the public on illicit discharges and promote public reporting of illicit discharges and improper disposal of materials into the MS4.

Activity: Water Quality Tip Line

Priority: High

Target audience: General public, residents, public employees, visitors, schools, businesses, industries, construction contactors, and developers

Key message: Reporting illicit discharges helps keep local waters and the waters of the state clean. If pollutants or dumping is observed, it should be reported.

Delivery mechanism: Promote SCC's 24-hour anonymous Water Quality Tip Line for reporting illicit discharges and pollution problems by placing the phone number and information on websites.

Year and frequency of implementation: Continuous; tip line will be monitored and updated as needed.

Responsible party: SCC will maintain the hotline; SCC, NEW Partners, and Nested Jurisdictions will place the tip line on their websites.

Evaluation: Number of calls, nature of complaints, and follow-up actions will be recorded.

(D) Promote preferred cleaning materials and procedures for car, pavement, and power washing.

Activity: Utilize social media postings

Priority: Low

Target audience: Residents, public employees, schools, businesses, industries, construction contractors, and developers

Key message: Implement BMPs to preserve water quality.

Delivery mechanism: Digital Resource Packet

Year and frequency of implementation: One Digital Resource Packet will be distributed 1X per year during the permit cycle. The Digital Resource Packet's social media calendar will act as a timeline for postings. When social media is not available graphics can be printed and displayed in a prominent location.

Responsible party: SCC will provide the digital resources; Nested Jurisdictions and NEW Partners will post and distribute materials using the social media calendar (see example calendar) and digital resource packet.

Evaluation: Document number of posts/materials distributed and provide analytics when available.

(E) Inform and educate the public on proper application and disposal of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers.

Activity: Promote Smiths Creek Landfill and publicize landfill policies

Priority: Medium

Target audience: Residents, public employees, schools, businesses, industries, construction contractors, and developers

Key message: Our county has a universal destination for all waste. Implement BMPs to ensure public safety and environmental sustainability.

Delivery mechanism: Webpage, social media and Stormwater rack cards (contained within the Digital Resource Packet).

Year and frequency of implementation: One Digital Resource Packet will be distributed 1X per year during the permit cycle. The Digital Resource Packet's social media calendar will act as a timeline for postings. When social media is not available graphics can be printed and displayed in a prominent location.

Responsible party: SCC, NEW Partners, and Nested Jurisdictions will post information on website(s).

Evaluation: Website analytics will be provided when available.

(F) Promote proper disposal practices for grass clippings, leaf litter, and animal wastes that may enter into the MS4.

Activity: Utilize social media postings, brochures/flyers, maintain the animal waste disposal dispensers with signage, promote the Educational Program Menu and a possible table top display

Priority: High

Target audience: Residents, visitors, public employees, schools, businesses, industries, construction contractors, developers, and students

Key message: Utilizing proper disposal practices preserves water quality.

Delivery mechanism: Digital Resource Packet, signage, presentations, and display

Year and frequency of implementation: One Digital Resource Packet will be distributed 1X per year during the permit cycle. The Digital Resource Packet's social media calendar will act as a timeline for postings. When social media is not available graphics can be printed and displayed in a prominent location. Animal waste dispensers with signage maintenance is continual. A minimum of 10 programs will be presented annually to students. Displays are available for checkout through the St. Clair County Health Department and should be displayed by NEW Partners 1X per year during the permit cycle.

Responsible party: SCC will provide the digital resources; Nested Jurisdictions and NEW Partners will post and distribute materials. SCC will provide displays; NEW Partners will check out displays and exhibit them. SCC will maintain animal waste signage and dispensers. SCC will provide presentations to the following school districts: Algonac, East China, Saint Clair, Marysville and Port Huron will host the presentations.

Evaluation: Document of number of postings and/or materials distributed. Website analytics will be provided when available. A teacher survey will be completed at the end of the presentation. Location and length of time display is on exhibit will be recorded.

(G) Identify and promote the availability, location, and requirements of facilities for collection or disposal of household hazardous waste, travel trailer sanitary wastes, chemicals, yard wastes, and motor vehicle fluids.

Activity: Promote available Smiths Creek Landfill resources and publicize policies for waste, publicize travel trailer sanitary waste disposal sites, and promote BMPs for yard wastes

Priority: Medium

Target audience: Residents, visitors, and applicable businesses/industry

Key message: Our county has a universal destination for all waste. Implement BMPs to ensure public safety and environmental sustainability. Use BMPs for yard waste and/or contract with services that apply BMPs for yard waste management.

Delivery mechanism: Webpage and Digital Resource Packet

Year and frequency of implementation: Website maintenance is continuous. One Digital Resource Packet will be distributed 1X per year during the permit cycle. The Digital Resource Packet's social media calendar will act as a timeline for postings. When social media is not available graphics can be printed and displayed in a prominent location.

Responsible party: SCC and NEW Partners will display information on their website(s). SCC will provide the digital resources; Nested Jurisdictions and NEW Partners will post and distribute the materials.

Evaluation: Website analytics will be provided when available. Document of number of postings and/or materials distributed.

(H) Inform and educate the public on proper septic system care and maintenance, and how to recognize system failure.

Activity: Utilize brochures, flyers, and social media to inform the public about septic system maintenance; possible table top display

Priority: High

Target audience: Residents, schools, businesses, industries, construction contractors

Key message: Routine maintenance can help prevent system failure.

Delivery mechanism: Webpage and Digital Resource Packet

Year and frequency of implementation: Continuous; website updates will be made as needed. One Digital Resource Packet will be distributed 1X per year during the permit cycle. The Digital Resource Packet's social media calendar will act as a timeline for postings. When social media is not available graphics can be printed and displayed in a prominent location.

Responsible party: SCC and NEW Partners will display information on their websites. SCC will provide the digital resources; NEW Partners will post and distribute the materials.

Evaluation: Website analytics will be provided when available. Document number of postings and/or materials distributed. Location and length of time display is on exhibit will be recorded.

(I) Educate the public on, and promote the benefits of, green infrastructure and Low Impact Development.

Activity: Host information on webpage; possible table to display

Priority: Low

Target audience: Commercial, industrial and institutional sites

Key message: Allowing stormwater to filter through the soil reduces contaminants entering local waterways.

Delivery mechanism: Webpage

Year and frequency of implementation: Continuous; updates will be made as needed.

Responsible party: SCC, NEW Partners, and Nested Jurisdictions will post information on website(s).

Evaluation: Website analytics will be provided when available. Location and length of time display is on exhibit will be recorded.

(J) Identify and educate commercial, industrial, and institutional entities likely to contribute pollutants to stormwater runoff.

Activity: List BMPs and stormwater guidelines on webpage

Priority: Low

Target audience: Commercial, industrial and institutional sites

Key message: Properly dispose of chemicals, toxins, and other products that can negatively impact waterways; follow guidelines when cleaning equipment.

Delivery mechanism: Webpage

Year and frequency of implementation: Continuous; updates will be made as needed.

Responsible party: SCC, NEW Partners, and Nested Jurisdictions will display information on their webpages.

Evaluation: Website analytics will be provided when available.

Example Social Media Calendar:

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT		
STORMWATER		
12-MONTH SOCIAL MEDIA POSTING TIMELINE		
2025		
JANUARY Stormwater Education Programs	FEBRUARY Water Conservation	MARCH Pet Waste World Water Day March 22
APRIL Ours to Protect Earth Fair	MAY Don't Over Mow Beach Monitoring Starts	JUNE Sturgeon Fest Share Beach Program Water Quality Advisories
JULY 4H Event Promotion Share Beach Program Water Quality Advisories	AUGUST Share Beach Program Water Quality Advisories Car Washes	SEPTEMBER Septic Smart Beach Monitoring Concludes
OCTOBER Yard Waste	NOVEMBER Snow and Ice	DECEMBER

**Posts shown in green will become available closer to the event.