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**New stormwater management requirements help protect water quality**

St. Paul, Minn. – The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Citizens’ Board recently approved reissuance of a permit that helps protect water quality by reducing the amount of polluted runoff reaching streams, rivers and lakes. The Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit regulates stormwater discharge from counties, cities, townships and other government entities in urbanized areas.

Managing stormwater helps protect human health and the environment. Stormwater runs off of roads and driveways, rooftops, lawns and construction sites into storm sewers, picking up many pollutants along the way and discharging them directly into surface waters. In addition, storm sewers move water quickly off the land instead of allowing it to filter through the soil to replenish drinking water supplies. Stormwater discharges also increase the flow of surface waters, often resulting in stream bank erosion.

The goal of the MS4 program is to prevent or reduce the discharge of pollutants to stormwater, and ultimately, surface waters. “We want waters that are fishable and swimmable and to protect drinking water resources,” says Duane Duncanson, project manager at the MPCA. “Our intent is to do this in the most reasonable, practical, affordable and flexible way possible while complying with state and federal regulations and, above all, remaining protective of human health and the environment.”

The 2013 MS4 permit reissuance is the result of an extensive stakeholder process spanning more than three years and including more than 24 stakeholder meetings, two public notice periods and substantial permit modifications. The MPCA Citizens’ Board unanimously approved the permit reissuance on Tuesday, May 21, 2013.

Each phase of the MS4 program is meant to include additional conditions for managing stormwater. The 2013 permit reissuance is no exception and contains a number of improvements and changes from the 2006 permit. Municipalities reauthorized to discharge stormwater under the recently reissued permit will be required to update their existing stormwater programs to include practices that will better protect Minnesota’s water resources. Some of these practices include:

* Impaired waters

Preventing or reducing the discharge of specific pollutants identified as causing or contributing to a water quality impairment, as defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-approved Total Maximum Daily Load studies

* Illegal discharges

Mapping all storm sewer pipes between 12 inches and 24 inches in diameter to better facilitate tracking, investigating and eliminating illegal discharges and training all field employees to recognize and report illegal discharges

* Erosion and sediment control

Updating local erosion and sediment control programs to be at least as stringent as the statewide standards established by the MPCA

* Construction

Ensuring developers and contractors implement stormwater control measures that mimic natural conditions (infiltration, evapotranspiration, water reuse, etc.) so that post-construction stormwater runoff volume is not greater than pre-construction runoff volume

The MPCA is committed to providing assistance to municipalities implementing the reissued MS4 permit. Guidance documents, workshops and other education and outreach tools are currently in development and will be made available to regulated parties in the near future. Interested parties are encouraged to sign up for MPCA’s MS4 program messaging through GovDelivery at <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNPCA/subscriber/new>.

For more information on the MS4 permit, including a webcast of the recent MPCA Citizens’ Board meeting and a copy of the permit and all supporting documents, visit the MPCA website at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/cy6pkcd>.

More information on the MS4 program is available on the MPCA website at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/sbiza7c>.

**Broadcast version**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Citizens’ Board recently approved reissuance of a permit that helps protect water quality by reducing the amount of polluted runoff reaching streams, rivers and lakes. The permit reissuance is part of a phased approach to stormwater management in the state. New conditions in the permit relate to impaired waters, illegal discharges, erosion and sediment control and construction stormwater requirements.

Additional information about the MS4 permit can be found on the [Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s website](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/about-mpca/mpca-overview/mpca-citizens-board/mpca-citizens-board-may-2013.html).

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