

What is the DTP Stormwater Module and How Can it Help MS4's Meet State Stormwater Requirements ?

Introduction

The DTP Stormwater Module is difficult to describe in words as it is a multi-purpose tool with many interwoven functions. However, this summary is an attempt to provide a broad understanding of “What is the DTP Stormwater Module” and “How Can it Help MS4's Meet State Stormwater Requirements”. In addition to this summary, a better understanding of the Stormwater Module can be obtained by viewing an example of a module that has been fully implemented and published to the internet. MS4's that have used and published the module can be examined through the following link: <http://digitaltowpath.org/content/Generic/View/48> . It should be noted that some MS4s' modules may be more fully developed than others.

The Stormwater Module was specifically designed for, and is intended for use by, municipalities and other entities that are regulated under the NYS SPDES Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (a.k.a. the MS4 Permit). Although there is some overlap of the MS4 Permit with the NYS SPDES Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activities (a.k.a. the Construction Permit), this module should not be confused with and is not for developing site specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPs).

What is the Stormwater Module?

The Stormwater Module is essentially a web-based application that helps the MS4 to organize, manage, and/or publish all of its stormwater information. A web-based application is a software package that can be accessed through a web browser. The software and database reside at a central server rather than being installed on the desktop system and it is accessed over a network.

In its very basic sense, the Stormwater Module provides a data management and data organization template that (when populated and subsequently enabled) will automatically create a series of fully descriptive and ordered stormwater web pages. These pages (and the specific information, documents, files and publications that are added by the MS4) have been formatted to serve as the MS4s' required Stormwater Management Program Plan (SWMPP). Additionally, since the application is web-based, the MS4's Stormwater Management Program Plan is, therefore, automatically and readily available to the public.

Relationship to the Digital Towpath Cooperative

The Stormwater Module was developed through a partnership of the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program and the Digital Towpath Cooperative and is, therefore, often referred to as the “Digital Towpath Stormwater Module” or the “DTP Stormwater Module”. A full

understanding of the formation and functioning of the Digital Towpath Cooperative is not necessarily needed to use the Stormwater Module but may provide some insight into how the module was developed and how it is distributed.

The Digital Towpath Cooperative is a consortium of local government entities organized through an intermunicipal agreement. The Cooperative currently provides over 140 municipalities and entities within NY State with web-based systems for website management and other multi-purpose electronic documents management systems. Specifically, the DTP Cooperative provides web-based applications for: website development and content management; email and email management systems; on-line real property information; on-line forms and applications; secure off-site backup and storage of electronic documents; and electronic document security. The DTP system was specifically designed with the needs and capabilities of local governments in mind.

The Stormwater Module is an additional web-based application provided through the DTP Cooperative and was developed using a framework that is similar to the other applications provided by Digital Towpath. While the Digital Towpath Cooperative directly hosts a number of municipal web-sites that use their applications, the Stormwater Module can be easily integrated into an existing website that may be hosted elsewhere.

Organization of the Module

A fully populated and implemented Stormwater Module has been formatted to include two sections that provide two very basic needs. The first section - titled "Quick Links" - provides basic stormwater information that the general public would most likely be interested in. The second section provides more detailed information regarding the MS4's stormwater program and its' Stormwater Management Program Plan (SWMPP).

With regard to the basic information for the public, the module template includes sub-sections where the following types of information can be added: stormwater contacts; a reporting hotline with both on-line and telephone contact options; other cooperating department and agency contact information; stormwater fact sheets and publications; links to MS4 newsletters; links to community calendars and events; and links to EPA, DEC and other agency information.

The more detailed information regarding the MS4's overall stormwater program and Stormwater Management Program Plan (SWMPP) includes sub-sections regarding: text that describes the federal and state stormwater programs and what's required of the MS4; a glossary of stormwater management terms; characteristics of the MS4 (including watersheds, receiving waterbodies, population characteristics, development and land use characteristics, and maps); a description of Pollutant's of Concern (including potential sources); a description of waterbodies and geographic areas of concern; non-stormwater discharges being addressed by the MS4; and a description of each of the six Minimum Control Measures (including a textual summary of requirements, activities and BMPs selected by the MS4, who's responsible for the development and implementation of the BMP's, the status of each activity, measurable goals, and links to related documents). The more detailed section also includes information on the MS4s stormwater program budget (including funding sources) and information required for reporting on the effectiveness of their program (including current and past

Annual Reports, draft reports, public notice, an opportunity for on-line public comment, and program assessments).

A more complete listing of the content of the Stormwater Module template is provided in Appendix A and is formatted to be reflective of a table of contents that one might find in a written Stormwater Management Program Plan.

In addition to being pre-formatted and organized, the module also includes many sections with pre-written text. The intent was that, rather than each MS4 reinventing the wheel and creating its own text to describe their specific activities, the module provides standard text as gleaned from the General Permit and guidance documents. While there is no need for each community to develop their own text descriptions, they are able to modify any text in a manner similar to editing a MS Word document.

There are also a number of other miscellaneous functions of the Stormwater Module. For example, the Module is flexible in that the MS4 can insert information requested in the template - or not. Similarly, information that is provided can be changed and the formats provided can be altered. Another miscellaneous function of note involves the presence of pre-established links that are provided throughout the module. For example, in addressing Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination, links to the EPA's webpages and guidance documents dealing with IDDE are already provided. The MS4 can choose to include these or delete these links.

The MS4 maintains full control over the module locally, so there is no need to depend on others for: development of a stormwater plan, modifications to the module, or changes to the municipal website.

Some Benefits of the Module

As mentioned earlier, a fully populated and implemented Stormwater Module can serve as the MS4's Stormwater Management Program Plan (SWMPP). However, the module itself will also help the MS4 to meet many of the very specific requirements of the MS4 Permit. For example, certain public education and outreach requirements contained in Minimum Control Measure 1 or required public notices and public availability of documents can be easily provided over the internet by including such information in the module. MS4 Annual Reports and draft reports can be made available and there are various methods built into the module (such as on-line comment forms) that can help to easily obtain public comment.

In addition to the benefits to public notice and availability of documents, there are a number of technical benefits to using the Stormwater Module. For example, since the module itself is the MS4's Stormwater Management Program Plan, the plan (module) can be easily kept up-to-date as Best Management Practices and activities are completed or new ones initiated. With a hard-copy SWMPP, it is not only difficult to keep the plan up-to-date, but it requires re-printing and redistribution of that plan.

The module also provides benefits in the management of the MS4s' stormwater information including electronic documents, files, mapping and other data. The pre-formatted nature and template structure of the module acts as a combined file cabinet and bulletin board that helps the MS4 to post, file and subsequently locate all types of stormwater program information. Documents can be located

and retrieved using a search function within the module or by accessing the “Documents and Links Index”. This is a very useful function – especially in helping the MS4 locate specific information during a program audit. The state and federal stormwater program auditors would also be able to access certain documents posted by the MS4 to the internet and, therefore, could accomplish much of the program audit through an off-site desktop review.

Below is a summary of some of the requirements included in the MS4 Permit and an indication of whether those requirements can be addressed using the Stormwater Module.

Partial Listing of MS4 Permit Requirements	Can this be Addressed Using the DTP Stormwater Module?	
	Yes	No
• Identify and publish stormwater contacts	✓	
• Present the Annual Report to the public.	✓	
• Give the public the opportunity to comment on the Annual Report.	✓	
• Develop a stormwater documents library	✓	
• Distribute printed materials	✓	
• Develop a stormwater website	✓	
• Describe to the public and target audiences, the impacts of stormwater discharges on waterbodies.	✓	
• Identify Pollutants of Concern (POC's).	✓	
• Identify Waterbodies of Concern.	✓	
• Identify geographic areas of concern.	✓	
• Select specific BMP's and activities to ensure the reduction of POCs in stormwater discharges.	✓	
• Develop, implement and record measurable goals associated with each Minimum Control Measure.	✓	
• Obtain input from key individuals and groups.	✓	
• Provide program access to those who want it.	✓	
• Comply with Open Meetings Law and public notice requirements	✓	
• Create a Stormwater Hotline	✓	
• Post and distribute stormwater ordinances and local laws	✓	
• Inform employees, businesses and the public of the hazards associated with illegal discharges and improper disposal of waste.	✓	
Etc. etc.		

Additional Information

Additional information about the Stormwater Module can be obtained by contacting HOCCPP staff at 315-798-5710 or by visiting the DTP website at <http://digitaltowpath.org/content/Generic/View/44>

Appendix A

Stormwater Module - Table of Contents

Section 1 - Quick Links: Basic Info for the Public

- A. Reporting Hotline
 - Hotline Phone Number
 - Hotline Contact Info
 - On-line Reporting Form
- B. What is Stormwater?
 - Introductory Text
- C. Local Stormwater Contacts
 - Stormwater Program Coordinator
 - Chief Elected Official
 - Other MS4 Boards and Departments, etc.
- D. Fact Sheets and Misc. Publications
 - Introduction
 - Links to documents
- E. Newsletters
 - Links to Community Newsletters
- F. Activities and Events
 - Links to Community Calendar
- G. Other Stormwater Agencies
 - Links to outside partners and agencies
- H. Frequently Asked Questions

Section 2 - The Stormwater Program and Plan

- A. Introduction to the Stormwater Program and Plan
 - Introductory Text
 - Glossary of Terms
 - Copy of NOI
- B. Characteristics of the MS4
 - Introduction
 - Watersheds and Receiving Waterbodies
 - Population Characteristics
 - Development and Land Use Characteristics
 - MS4 Maps
- C. Pollutants of Concern
 - Introduction
 - Pollutants of Concern and Potential Sources
 - Waterbodies of Concern
 - Geographic Areas of Concern
 - Non-Stormwater Discharges
 - Addressing Pollutants of Concern
- D. Public Education and Outreach
 - Introduction
 - Selected Activities and BMP's
 - Status and Responsibilities
 - Measurable Goals

- Links to related documents
- E. Public Involvement and Participation
 - Introduction
 - Selected Activities and BMP's
 - Status and Responsibilities
 - Measurable Goals
 - Links to related documents
- F. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
 - Introduction
 - Selected Activities and BMP's
 - Status and Responsibilities
 - Measurable Goals
 - Links to related documents
- G. Construction Site - Stormwater Runoff Control
 - Introduction
 - Selected Activities and BMP's
 - Status and Responsibilities
 - Measurable Goals
 - Links to related documents
- H. Post Construction - Stormwater Management
 - Introduction
 - Selected Activities and BMP's
 - Status and Responsibilities
 - Measurable Goals
 - Links to related documents
- I. Municipal Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping
 - Introduction
 - Selected Activities and BMP's
 - Status and Responsibilities
 - Measurable Goals
 - Links to related documents
- J. Stormwater Program Budget
 - Introduction
 - Municipal Budget
 - Stormwater Budget
 - Funding Sources
- K. Program Reporting and Effectiveness
 - Introduction
 - Annual Report
 - Draft Annual Report and Public Notice
 - On-line Comment Form
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 - Program Assessment Information
 - Links to Other Related Documents

Document and Link Index