



City of Cañon City

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Stormwater Management Program News

Stormwater Management Program – Why, Where, & How?

These are questions on the minds of many Cañon City residents and which I hear and for which I often provide explanations. In past issues, I have referred to the required components of the Stormwater Management Program, one of which is Public Education, Outreach & Participation. In 2008, I intend to devote every issue of this newsletter to providing education, outreach and, hopefully, participation which will increase understanding and help address these often asked questions:

- Why must we have a Stormwater Management Program?
- Why must I pay for the program?
- How was the stormwater fee determined?
- How are the funds being generated by the stormwater fee utilized?
- Where are the stormwater regulations enforced?
- Where are the stormwater regulations not enforced?

They say that information is power. I hope to empower the citizens of the Cañon City to understand the importance of clean water and how each of us does our part to achieve that goal. In this issue, I will at least partially cover why we are required to have a stormwater management program. In subsequent issues I will cover the why, where & how of the other required program components in detail.

Those required program components are:

- **Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination** – Sorry about the name, it is required federal government-ese terminology. I prefer Water Pollutant Detection & Elimination which is more reflective and to the point of the objective of this program component.
- **Construction & Post-Construction Stormwater Management** – Not intended to single out a specific industry but commercial & residential development (and redevelopment) provides the single greatest opportunity to proactively reduce the impacts associated with increased runoff attributable to growth and urbanization.
- **Municipal Pollution Prevention** – Our City Charter states that “Laws enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado, as codified in the Colorado Revised Statutes, shall apply to and be the law applicable to the City of Cañon City in all respects”. So yes, we are required to practice what we preach. Considering the diversity and extent of the municipally owned infrastructure that the City is responsible for, implementation of this required component has a big impact on quality & quantity of stormwater runoff. Which leads to “Why must we have a stormwater management program?”

There are two approaches to answer; *Why we must have a stormwater program?*

1. Because it is to our own and future generation's benefit and/or;
2. Because the Federal Clean Water Act mandates it.

Approach #1.

Stormwater discharges are generated by runoff from land and impervious areas such as paved streets, parking lots, and building rooftops during rainfall and snow events that often contain pollutants in quantities that could adversely affect water quality. Polluted storm water runoff is a leading cause of impairment to the nearly 40 percent of surveyed U.S. water bodies which do not meet water quality standards. Over land or via storm sewer systems, polluted runoff is discharged, often untreated, directly into local water bodies. When left uncontrolled, this water pollution can result in the destruction of fish, wildlife, and aquatic life habitats; a loss in aesthetic value; and threats to public health due to contaminated food, drinking water supplies, and recreational waterways¹.

Icing on the cake- In addition to addressing pollution, the program also provides the avenue by which maintenance and capital projects will get paid for. While the current revenue does not provide enough to do large capital projects, a large portion of the program dollars does go towards maintenance of stormwater facilities.

Approach #2.

Stormwater discharges from urbanized areas are considered pollution sources and therefore the EPA requires coverage by a permit. Mandated by Congress under the Clean Water Act, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Storm Water Program addresses non-agricultural (urban) sources of storm water discharges that adversely affect the quality of our nation's waters. The federal program mandates that State and municipal discharging entities to implement control measures to prevent harmful pollutants in their storm water runoff from reaching water bodies, as prescribed in storm water permits.

Our State program is the Colorado Discharge Permit System (CDPS) and the Water Quality Control Division has stormwater regulations (5CCR 1002-61) in place to meet federal requirements. These regulations require specific municipalities to obtain a CDPS permit for stormwater discharges. Municipalities are required to reduce the discharge of pollutants to protect water quality, and to satisfy the appropriate water quality requirements of the Colorado Water Quality Control Act (25-8-101 et seq., C.R.S.) and the Colorado Discharge Permit Regulations (61.0).

Regulated municipalities which do not obtain and implement a CDPS permit are in violation of the Colorado Water Quality Control Act, 25-8-101. For facilities covered under a CDPS permit, failure to comply with any CDPS permit requirement constitutes a violation. Civil penalties for violations of the Act or CDPS permit requirements may be up to \$10,000 per day. Criminal pollution of State waters is punishable by fines of up to \$25,000 per day.²

In keeping with the intent of the program's Public Education, Outreach & Participation component, especially participation, please feel free to direct any further questions to Rik Gay, City of Cañon City Stormwater Program at either rlgay@canoncity.org or 276-5265.

¹ http://www.epa.gov/npdes/pubs/sw_qanda_intro.pdf

² <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/wq/PermitsUnit/stormwater/ms4-rat.pdf>