

Property Management Stormwater Education Seminar Extended Abstract

Category: Track D - NPDES & Stormwater Management or Track E – Education
Presenter: Susan Libes

Title: Public Outreach Effort: Property Management Stormwater Education Seminar

The City of Myrtle Beach obtained coverage under the State of South Carolina National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Regulated Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) in July of 2007. Our Post Construction Management and Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) programs officially began in October 2007.

After six months of performing post construction inspections and responding to illicit discharge service requests, city staff quickly realized that property management companies play an important role in promoting desirable stormwater management practices. Quite often, property managers serve as the first line of communication with onsite contractors, tenants, and in some cases, homeowners associations. These individuals have a working knowledge of the many utilities located on the property, scheduled maintenance or service programs, and frequently field a variety of customer service issues on a daily basis.

To meet this educational need, the City of Myrtle Beach partnered with the Coastal Waccamaw Stormwater Education Consortium (CWSEC) to provide a no cost stormwater educational seminar for this target group. The ultimate goal of the educational effort was to empower the audience with basic stormwater concepts so they could use this newly found knowledge to properly identify stormwater facilities on their representative properties, understand where and how stormwater flows, and discover methods of adequately maintaining and improving the functionality of local stormwater facilities.

The stormwater seminar planning phase consisted of five main components: developing a target audience, outreach strategy, educational goals and objectives, determination of educational contributors, and selection of a venue and date. The initial target audience for the public outreach effort were property management companies, however news of the seminar spread the audience grew to include interested parties from other MS4 communities, state regulators, drainage system maintenance service providers, homeowners, and realtors.

The educational goals and objectives of the seminar were to communicate the following: stormwater issues need to be resolved at the local level, local MS4

communities are following federal and state stormwater regulations, how to identify and understand stormwater facilities and drainage systems, understand the importance of pollution prevention and maintenance plans, and collaborate with CWSEC or City of Myrtle Beach staff to help answer any questions.

The audience was introduced to stormwater using a watershed approach and knowledge that everyone is affected downstream, which in the case of the City of Myrtle Beach downstream is either the Atlantic Intercoastal Waterway or the Atlantic Ocean. In order for participants to obtain knowledge of various stormwater facilities, a visual-aide concept was used to challenge attendees to properly sequence components various stormwater drainage systems. The audience was divided into groups to perform this task and later asked to present, or teach, their drainage system sequence to others. The blend of stormwater regulators, maintenance staff, and property managers in each group enhanced the discussions and overall learning experience.

Overall, the participant evaluations of the stormwater educational seminar were highly favorable. In fact, the participant feedback supports our goals of them obtaining “a new awareness of inspecting ponds, drains, etc.” and “learning more about the needs of our customers.”