**MS4 Watershed-Based Permit Stakeholder Organizational Meeting**

**June 16, 2010**

**Synopsis submitted by Sarah Holcombe**

Hello all:

Thanks to those of you who were able to attend the meeting on the 16th.

At the beginning of the meeting, we discussed and reviewed the permitting options presented at the first meeting which were:

* Single Entity Watershed Permit – one entity holds the permit and controls the other entities required to participate
* Multi-Party Watershed Permit – every entity equally shares responsibility as co-permittees
* Common Conditions Watershed Permit – An overarching permit – permittees keep their existing NPDES permits, and this is an additional permit that only addresses contaminants of concern.
* General Watershed Permit – need more information/clarification from EPA. However, information here might help: <http://www.epa.gov/npdes/pubs/watershed-potential_partners.pdf> (Page 3)

From the discussion, it appears the group would be most comfortable with a Common Conditions Watershed Permit, with the creation of a staff-based group similar to Albuquerque’s Stormwater Quality Team (SQT) to manage the permit.

There was a lot of discussion on watershed boundaries, and subsequently, entities that need to be involved in the permitting pilot. The main conclusion the group made was that the smaller the area that the watershed covers, the easier the permit will be to manage. However, considering the potential pollutant sources for the contaminants of concern that we are dealing with (Dissolved Oxygen, PCBs and E. coli), it may not be as simple as just decreasing the size of the watershed we are looking at. The group did not come to a final decision on watershed size by the end of the meeting.

Related to watershed size, there were some issues regarding pollutant inputs/background pollutants in the watershed. There was discussion regarding Cochiti Lake and the Santa Fe area (including Los Alamos and Espanola) to the North, and the Jemez watershed to the West. From the TMDL documentation that we accessed during the meeting, it appeared that the closest Jemez segment to the MRG was impaired for Arsenic and Boron. DO levels in SWQB data for the Jemez range from 6.89 mg/L to 10.51 mg/L.

I was tasked with asking EPA a few questions including:

1. Will the Pueblos be permitted equally under this permit?

2. How will we get nonpoint sources to participate?

3. Would EPA pay for preliminary monitoring, to be used to determine sampling points and possibly eliminate or include certain parties from required participation in the permit?

4. Is there any guidance document (or person) that could better explain the General Watershed Permit option? The guidance from Tetra Tech isn’t clear.

5. Clarification on exactly what layers of GIS coverage are needed.

[From a previous email I received from Nelly Smith regarding GIS layers needed]

To facilitate our discussions, I would like to put together a map for the Middle Rio Grande with the following features:   
  
-  Phase I and Phase II MS4s boundaries   
- 12 HUC, 14 HUC, or smaller size HUC   
- Middle Rio Grande main channel, small and major irrigation channels, major ditches, arroyos. and other surface water features (e.g. dams, lakes)   
- Impaired MRG sections (e-coli and Al)   
- Designated Critical Areas -specially for the Rio Grande silvery minnow and the Southwestern willow flycatcher   
- Sensitive areas (e.g. wet lands, springs - if any)   
- Monitoring locations (USGS locations, State locations, MS4 locations)

 I sent Nelly an email this morning with the questions above. As soon as I get a response I will let you all know.

 I was also tasked with sending information to the group on a few items. I am in the middle of procuring our WQ data for the reach of the Rio Grande above Hwy 550 to the Angostura Diversion. Depending on how large the files are, I may have to get creative to get the information out to all of you. I am also in the middle of getting a map of the MRG together, which is specific to our purposes. I am working with our GIS guru to put together a representative map including 12 digit HUCs (as opposed to the 10 digit HUCs that were used on the MRG TMDL map), major roads, land use, land status, NPDES permits, city/county boundaries and tribal lands.

 At this point, I will propose that we have one more meeting before the August meeting with EPA (which is August 11-12 - from 11-5 on the 11th and probably 9-1 on the 12th - here at the NMED District 1 office in Albuquerque). I would like to propose the 27th, 28th or 29th of July, so that Tim Karpoff (our facilitator for the formal process with EPA) can also participate. Please let me know which date would work best for you.

 And, a reminder that the EPA Region 6 MS4 Conference is next week in Santa Fe at the Santa Fe Convention Center. You can find information here: <http://www.epa.gov/region6/water/npdes/sw/ms4/conference.htm> I will be at the conference all week so I will get the map and WQ data out to you as soon as I can.

 As always, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, please let me know. I’m looking forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

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