

Where do Master Water Stewards Fit?



In this final module, we will look at where Master Water Stewards might best fit into the structure of water policy and governance.

Implementing a pollution reduction plan requires local governments to work with both regulated and unregulated sources of pollution, including:

- Regulatory (through the Permits)
 - Industrial and Municipal wastewater
 - Large Animal Feeding operations
 - Permitted Storm water
- Voluntary (incentives)
 - Non-permitted urban run-off
 - Agricultural run-off
 - Septic Systems

As Master Water Stewards, you will be working primarily on the issue of stormwater. In that realm, there are three types of permits that are issued:

- Three permit types
 - Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4)
 - Industrial
 - Certain industries
 - Plan similar to MS4
 - Construction
 - 1 acre more
 - Plan similar to MS4

Your focus will be on the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4).

- Who is covered

- Publicly owned or operated storm water infrastructure
- Cities, townships, public institutions
- Within Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

Each MS4 permitted city has to file a plan with the PCA on how they will reduce pollution and meet the requirements of their MS4 permit. The plan must include specific plans to address six Minimum Control Measures (MCMs):

- Storm water Pollution Protection Plan
 1. Public education
 2. Public participation
 - Annual meeting and report
 3. A plan to detect illicit discharges
 4. Construction-site runoff controls
 5. Post construction runoff controls
 6. Storm water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)

At this point, it must seem like every single drop of water that falls from the sky has been accounted for, and every pollution source considered. But no, there are still factors that influence the quality and quantity of water that are not regulated by the Clean Water Act:

- Ground water
 - State protection, no federal
- Septic Systems
 - State law, no federal
- Agricultural runoff
 - Huge controversy. Agricultural land use is responsible for a majority of non-point source water pollution, but remains unregulated

There are two other political entities you should know about in your work as a Master Water Steward.

The state of Minnesota passed the Watershed District Act in 1955. Watershed districts are a local government unit, with the power to levy taxes to fund their work.

- Boundaries follow natural watershed boundaries
- Manage water by watershed districts rather than other political subdivisions
- Governed by a Board of Managers + staff + Citizen Advisory Committee
- Established as a voluntary unit of government

Meaning, citizens of an area can request the formation of a watershed district, but are not required to.

There is a second type of political organization that manages water, aptly named a watershed management organization.

- Located in the Metropolitan area only
- Created by 1982 Metropolitan Area Surface Water Management Act (103B)

- Implement comprehensive surface water management plans
- Mandatory in the Metropolitan area
- Focus on Storm water management
- Funded by the cities within the watershed boundaries.

Learning Activity

In the previous module, you looked at watershed districts, watershed management organizations and Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Make sure you know which kind of organization you will work with, and at least one contact within the organization.

These three types of water management organizations help Minnesota meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act. Going back to the very beginning of our look at policy, the CWA delegates an agency to enforce the CWA. That state agency, the Pollution Control Agency, issues a permit to cities to discharge pollution to public waters. That permit- the MS4 permit- is why we created the Master Water Stewards program.



Take a look at part of the permit-

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/view-document.html?gid=19474>

Scroll down to page 10, and look through the six Minimum Control Measures. In Measure 1, section a, (!), that's you. That's where we believe Master Water Stewards can have a tremendous impact on communities and the health of water.

As you have seen, there is an entire system of federal, state, local and watershed level agencies, organizations, laws, permits, issues, and challenges all focused on protecting and restoring the health of our waters. We developed the Master Water Stewards program to activate one of our most important resources in this challenge. YOU.

Learning Activity

Find the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for your city. Not always as easy as it sounds. The easiest way I have found to locate a city's SWPPP is to google the following string-

cityname mn swppp

Once you have found the SWPPP, look through the six minimum control measures and how the city proposes to fulfill the requirements.

In the Forum for this topic, post some ideas on how you as a Master Water Steward might become involved in something the city has proposed as part of their stormwater management plan. How can you lend your efforts to add to what your city is doing? Our goal for Stewards is to have you help cities accomplish the critical work they are required to in managing stormwater. The more familiar you are with the work the city has to do, the more effectively you can contribute.

Once you have posed your ideas, give some feedback to at least two other Stewards on their ideas. Please make sure you post constructive, respectful comments.