

Public Education & Outreach Plan

Public Education and Outreach is one of the six (6) Minimum Control Measures (MCM's) required of MS4's under the MS4 program. The goal of the Public Education and Outreach Plan (PEOP) MCM is to build greater support for the stormwater management program (SWMP), increase compliance, and ultimately increase environmental awareness amongst members of the community.

Federal EPA Regulations specifically require the following under this MCM:

“Implement a public education program to distribute educational materials to the community or conduct equivalent outreach activities about the impacts of stormwater discharges on water bodies and the steps that the public can take to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff.”

There are four (4) Best Management Practices (BMP's) required under this MCM. These BMP's and related activities are listed on the following chart. The Bern Township PEOP is detailed below.

COOPERATIVE EFFORT

Bern Township is a participating member of the Berks County MS4 Steering Committee. This committee combines the efforts of multiple agencies and thirty six (36) municipalities within the county to implement public education, outreach, and involvement requirements of their respective MS4 Permits. This combined effort has provided more resources and opportunities to educate the public than a municipality could do independently.

While the Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County Conservation District and the Berks Conservancy implement the Berks County Cooperative Education Program on behalf of and in cooperation with the participating MS4 Permit Holders, Bern Township realizes the importance to develop its own Public Education and Outreach Plan to work in harmony with the cooperative effort and to follow the PA DEP protocol for the education / outreach portions of the Minimum Control Measures (MCM) #1, #2, #6 specifically, along with certain educational information overlaps for MCM #3, #4 and #5.

Public Education & Outreach Plan

GOAL

The goal of the Bern Township PEOP, in conjunction with the Berks County MS4 Steering Committee, is to ensure that the various target audiences are educated about the impacts of stormwater discharges on water bodies and the steps that the public can take to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff. The Bern Township PEOP, in concert with the MS4 Steering Committee, follows the public education / outreach format provided by the PA DEP. It includes target audiences, actions needed, responsible parties, etc. This document is intended to meet the measurable goals of MCM1, BMP's 1 through 2.

TARGET AUDIENCES

The below list is the PEOP's identified groups and individuals as target audiences for educational efforts and stakeholders for public participation efforts in regards to stormwater in MS4 municipalities.

GENERAL PUBLIC:

- Schools – Berks Career and Technology Center; Schuylkill Valley School District
- Bern Township Residents / Homeowners
- Agricultural Community – Bern Township Farmers and Ag Producers

BUSINESSES:

- Developers
- Engineers
- Architects

MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES:

- Bern Township Road Department Employees
- Bern Township Administrative Staff
- Bern Township Solicitor

Public Involvement & Participation Plan

Bern Township is working jointly with the Department of Environmental Protection to reduce the quantity of stormwater and increase the quality of stormwater runoff. Since Bern Township has urbanized areas, we are required to develop stormwater management programs which include a public involvement and participation program (PIPP). This program will provide the opportunity for student groups, township residents, township businesses and developers and municipal employees to have active involvement with our Multiple Separate Storm System (MS4) operation and help reduce the discharge of pollutants contained in stormwater runoff.

There are three (3) Best Management Practices (BMP's) required under this MCM. These BMP's and related activities are listed on the following chart. The Bern Township PIPP is detailed below.

COOPERATIVE EFFORT

Bern Township is a participating member of the Berks County MS4 Steering Committee. This committee combines the efforts of multiple agencies and thirty six (36) municipalities within the county to implement public education, outreach, and involvement requirements of their respective MS4 Permits. This combined effort has provided more resources and opportunities to educate the public than a municipality could do independently.

While the Berks County Planning Commission, Berks County Conservation District and the Berks Conservancy implement the Berks County Cooperative Education Program on behalf of and in cooperation with the participating MS4 Permit Holders, Bern Township realizes the importance to develop its own Public Involvement and Participation Plan (PIPP) to work in harmony with the cooperative effort and to follow the PA DEP protocol for the education / outreach portions of the Minimum Control Measures (MCM) #2.

GOAL

The goal of the Bern Township PIPP, in conjunction with the Berks County MS4 Steering Committee, is to provide the opportunity for the various target groups / individuals, identified in the Public Education and Outreach Plan document, to have an active involvement with MS4 operations, ordinances, and help prevent and / or reduce the discharge of pollutants contained in the stormwater runoff. This document is intended to meet the measurable goals of MCM2, BMP 1.

Public Involvement & Participation Plan

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE MEASURABLE GOALS

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESSES:

- When decisions are needed in regards to the development, implementation, and update of programs and activities related to this MS4 Permit, the public shall be given the opportunity to participate at various public meetings.
- This PIPP shall be publicly reviewed annually in order to keep it up to date and effective.

METHODS OF ROUTINE COMMUNICATION:

- Through the collaborative efforts of the Berks County MS4 Steering Committee Education Program Partners, various emails and newsletters will be distributed, websites shall be maintained to ensure that target audiences and stakeholders in stormwater related topics are aware of municipal efforts to prevent stormwater associated pollution and ways that they can partner with these groups.
- Bern Township shall make information available through the township website, newsletter, handouts / brochures and have stormwater as a public monthly meeting agenda item for discussion.
- Routine communication is targeted to the following audiences:

General Public: Bern Township residents / landowners, Berks Career and Technology Center, Schuylkill Valley School District, Agricultural Community – Bern Township Farmers and Ag Producers.

Businesses: Bern Township developers, engineers and architects.

Municipal Employees: Bern Township Road Department Employees, Township administrative staff and Township Solicitor.