



STORIES OF PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING HEALTHY WATERS

EPA Region 3 Water Protection Division

Counties and EPA Team Up on Stormwater Rules

Fairfax & Prince William County, Virginia · January 14, 2016

Two Virginia counties that created model programs for controlling municipal stormwater pollution following EPA enforcement actions are sharing their expertise with colleagues and regulators.

Professionals from Prince William and Fairfax counties in northern Virginia helped EPA lead two recent training exercises – one for state inspectors on how to check for stormwater violations, and another for fellow Virginia permittees on how to meet or exceed permit requirements.

The counties took a leadership role after successfully resolving programmatic issues identified in EPA compliance inspections in 2011 and subsequent administrative orders. Today, they have two of the region’s highest performing Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) programs.

Stormwater runoff is a leading cause of pollution in rivers and streams. The EPA Mid-Atlantic Water Protection Division NPDES Enforcement Branch has worked with municipalities and counties to improve MS4 compliance.

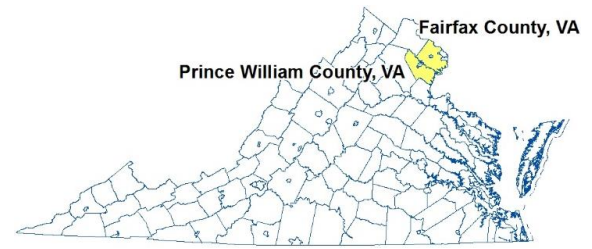
Last fall, Fairfax and Prince William counties joined EPA staff in leading training sessions for state inspectors from throughout the region. They explained some of their model procedures and led the trainees through mock inspections and other activities.

More recently, the counties helped EPA, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and a contractor lead a forum on MS4 compliance for a capacity audience of 150 Virginia MS4 permittees and others. EPA sponsored the special training event to help permit holders understand their obligations. Showcasing high-performing elements of their programs, Fairfax highlighted its post-construction stormwater management inspections and maintenance activities, and environmental engineer Bobby Jocz of Prince William County outlined new means to find, eliminate, and prevent illicit discharges.

Karlee H. Copeland of the Fairfax County Maintenance and Stormwater Management Division says local governments are the “boots on the ground when it comes to clean water” and that collaboration with fellow permittees “is key to sharing great ideas and finding efficiencies.”

“One of the biggest challenges in implementing MS4 programs is finding the most effective balance between compliance with increased administrative and reporting requirements and the implementation of stormwater practices that provide tangible water quality benefits,” she said. “Our state stormwater association (Virginia Municipal Stormwater Association) helps us navigate the ever-moving targets of how to best manage our stormwater, meet regulatory requirements and help improve the Chesapeake Bay and local water quality.”

EPA’s joint work with the counties demonstrates a new paradigm for how compliance assurance activities to protect human health and the environment can lead to long-term collaboration and shared accountability.



AT A GLANCE

- *Two Virginia counties showcase model aspects of their municipal stormwater programs after resolving programmatic issues identified by EPA in 2011.*

