

Proposed Updates to the Eastern Washington Municipal Stormwater General Permit

On October 19, 2011, the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) released the updated draft Eastern Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater General Permit (EWA permit) for a three-month public comment period.

The EWA permit is a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit that covers 18 cities and the urban areas of six counties. NPDES permits authorize discharges to surface waters under the Clean Water Act.

The permit also covers publicly owned stormwater systems within those coverage areas for entities such as ports, school and park districts, drainage districts, colleges and universities, and state government campuses. Along with the draft permit, Ecology issued a fact sheet explaining the proposed changes. Ecology also issued two Western Washington Municipal Stormwater General Permits for review and comment.

Due to 2011 legislation, in addition to the updated permits Ecology issued a draft of the current permit. The draft current permit is also subject to public review. It is to be in effect from 2012 to 2013, with no changes, while the updated permits will be in effect from 2013 to 2018.

Ecology invites public comments on the draft permit until 5 p.m., Feb. 3, 2012. For copies of the draft permits and more information on how to comment or about the workshops and public hearings, go to:
www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/municipal/2012draftMUNIcon.html

Ecology will consider all public comments and revise the draft permit. We expect to issue a final permit in June 2012, along with a Response to Comments.

Proposed changes in the draft permit

The draft permit proposes changes in several areas, including Low Impact Development (LID), monitoring, and Ecology's evaluation of possible new permittees.

MORE INFORMATION

Public Hearings and Workshops

www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/1110078.html

2012 permit reissuance

www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/municipal/2012Reissuance.html

New permittee evaluations

www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/municipal/2012NewPermitteeEval.html

Legislation regarding timelines for permit reissuance

www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/1110037.html

Contact information

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Ecology municipal stormwater contacts:

www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/municipal/municontacts.html

Special accommodations

If you need this document in a format for the visually impaired, call the Water Quality Program at 360-407-6600.

Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

Low Impact Development - LID

The draft permit proposes limited new requirements to begin implementing LID stormwater management in new development and redevelopment. Ecology drafted these requirements after a series of meetings with interested parties.

LID stormwater projects mimic natural drainage processes using site design and techniques to retain vegetation, limit paved and hard surfaces, and manage runoff on-site.

The Eastern Washington meetings addressed how LID might work in the Eastern Washington climate, soils, and geology, and what is known about LID techniques in those conditions. In addition, Ecology took informal public comments on a preliminary draft approach in May and June of 2011. Ecology recognizes the need to implement LID gradually in Eastern Washington

Ecology proposes LID requirements for cities and counties that include:

- Allowing runoff to percolate into the ground on-site for amounts that most permittees now require.
- Developing feasibility criteria to address local conditions such as soils that are too poor to let runoff soak in.

If funding is available, Ecology also plans to support LID research, a LID manual, and education to promote expanded use of LID in the future.

Monitoring requirements

The draft permit proposes monitoring requirements to answer important questions about the effectiveness of the stormwater management programs in the permits.

Ecology proposes that permittees work together to conduct regional studies to evaluate the use of specific requirements in the permit and the stormwater management manual. Cities and counties have made progress in building local programs in the first permit cycle, and it is important to know whether the programs are working. These studies should provide information that will improve permittees' programs and future permit requirements.

Phase II possible new permittees

Ecology is evaluating new, additional jurisdictions for possible permit coverage in the reissued EWA permit. The federal NPDES rule requires that Ecology evaluate cities that have grown to have municipal stormwater systems serving more than 10,000 residents since the last permit. The 2010 U.S. Census and a preliminary evaluation by Ecology identified the city of Grandview for further evaluation in Eastern Washington.

Ecology is also evaluating for coverage the Kittitas County unincorporated Ellensburg Urban Growth Area (UGA), a city of over 10,000 that was covered under the 2007 permit. Ecology completed an evaluation of Yakima County's unincorporated Sunnyside UGA, and is proposing to expand the County's coverage to include that area.

Ecology invites public comment on the new permittees proposed in the draft permits. As Ecology completes its evaluation, it will require permit coverage for those meeting the relevant criteria. For more information, go to www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/stormwater/municipal/2012NewPermitteeEval.html.