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A Watershed Approach to Stormwater Education - Developing Consortia in Coastal South Carolina

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Abstract Text:

With the advent of the NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) Phase II permit, municipalities throughout the United States are seeking ways to efficiently coordinate and implement their stormwater education and public involvement efforts. Realizing that stormwater is partitioned naturally by watersheds, educators in coastal South Carolina have chosen to coordinate their stormwater education and public involvement efforts according to watershed rather than by municipality, district, or county. This collaboration has resulted in the formation of a pilot working group, the Coastal Waccamaw Stormwater Education Consortium (CWSEC). The CWSEC has been charged with providing comprehensive stormwater education and public involvement programs for the citizens that live in the Waccamaw River drainage basin and the small coastal watersheds in northeastern South Carolina. The educating entities in the CWSEC are the Clemson University Carolina CLEAR program, the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium, Coastal Carolina University, the North Inlet-Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, the Waccamaw River Keeper, and Murrells Inlet 2007. These educators meet regularly with managers of the local municipal separate storm sewer systems and other local stakeholders, with regional stormwater managers, and with state agencies to discuss and amend work plans to maximize the efficacy of their educational efforts. The consortium has proven to be an effective medium for coordinating regional stormwater education and is serving as a model organization for other regions in South Carolina. In light of the success of the CWSEC, a similar consortium is being developed for the Ashley/Cooper River region near Charleston, South Carolina.

Impact Statement:

Program has coordinated regional efforts to implement NPDES phase II permit's minimum control measures for (1) public education and outreach and (2) public involvement. This program is recognized and commended by South Carolina's regulating authority (South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control).