

# **ERIE TOWNSHIP**

## **Public Education Plan (PEP)**

**APRIL 2018**

Revised, July 2020

**This PEP has been developed as part of the Storm Water Management plan for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Application for Discharge of Stormwater to Surface Waters from a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4)**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **Purpose of the Public Education Plan**

This Public Education Plan (PEP) was developed to fulfill the Public Education requirements of the State of Michigan's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Application for Discharge of Stormwater to Surface Waters or another jurisdiction's Storm Sewer, from a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). This PEP provides an outline of the actions Erie Township with the Urbanized Areas within its jurisdictional boundary will take to inform the residents, businesses and officials of Erie Township about their role in protecting water quality and preventing stormwater pollution in their community. This PEP outlines the ten (10) public education topics which must be communicated, prioritizes them based on a procedure for assessing high-priority community-wide issues, and targets issues to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff.

The goal for this PEP is to promote, publicize and facilitate a stormwater education program that encourages the public to reduce stormwater pollution to the greatest extent possible. The "public" is defined as all persons who potentially could affect the quality of stormwater discharges, including, but not limited to, residents, public employees, businesses, industries, construction contractors and developers.

This PEP was created for Erie Township and its residents who are subject to the aforementioned NPDES stormwater regulations.

### **Objectives**

The following objectives were developed to guide implementation of the Best Management Practices (BMP) outlined in this PEP:

- Raise awareness and knowledge among the residents of Erie Township on how their daily activities impact the watershed.
- Educate the public regarding the importance of watersheds as a significant natural resource and community asset by fostering stewardship and enthusiasm for the surface water resource.
- Improve understanding of the impacts of individual and group behaviors on water quality.
- Increase the number of individuals, residents, businesses and other organizations participating in water education and stewardship activities.

## **II. COLLABORATION OF NESTED JURISDICTION PARTNERS**

In developing this PEP, Erie Township will seek to develop cooperative partnerships with other municipalities or county agencies in Monroe County in the future, who agree that approaching storm water education on a multi-township or county-wide basis is cost-effective and environmentally sound. The collaborative approach provides a consistent and effective mechanism for protecting water resources across the county in the most cost-effective manner.

Because this plan is not collaborative currently Erie Township is responsible for ensuring its implementation. In the past the Monroe County Drain Commissioner (MCDC) implemented and

provided leadership on the majority of the public education activities listed in this plan. However, Erie Township will assume the responsibility in its jurisdictional area for this plan until a more cooperative and collaborative venture can be attained with other partners with similar NPDES MS4 Permits. Financial responsibility is only for Erie Township. However, should the township approach other similar permittees for a collaborative agreement. Then financial arrangements may change, to a collaborative group budget. At this time, the activities outlined in this plan will be implemented as the township is under obligation of the NPDES MS4 Permit for storm water discharge.

### **III. Required Permit Elements**

This PEP outlines the program to promote, publicize, and facilitate education for the purpose of encouraging the public to reduce the discharge of pollutants in stormwater to the maximum extent practicable. The PEP describes current and proposed BMPs which will be implemented to meet the minimum control measures required in the permit.

#### **PEP Priority Topics**

The public education topics A – J listed in *Table 1. Required Elements of the Public Education Plan (PEP)* below are identified in the permit application. The procedure for identifying high-priority community-wide issues and targeted issues to reduce pollutants in storm water runoff suited for public education efforts includes the following:

- Use of surveys of storm water related topics from other regions of Michigan.
- A review of the effectiveness of PEP activities implemented by Erie Township in the previous permit cycle.

Table 1. Required Elements of the Public Education Plan (PEP)

| <b>Code</b> | <b>PEP Topic</b>  | <b>Priority Ranking</b> |
|-------------|---|-------------------------|
| <b>A</b>    | Promote public responsibility and stewardship in the watershed  | High                    |
| <b>B</b>    | Inform and educate the public about the connection of the MS4 to area waterbodies and the potential impacts discharges could have on surface waters of the state  | High                    |
| <b>C</b>    | Educate the public on illicit discharges and promote public reporting of illicit discharges and improper disposal of materials into the MS4   | High                    |
| <b>D</b>    | Promote preferred cleaning materials and procedures for car, pavement, and power washing  | Low                     |
| <b>E</b>    | Inform and educate the public on proper application and disposal of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers   | Medium                  |
| <b>F</b>    | Promote proper disposal practices for grass clippings, leaf litter, and animal wastes that may enter into the MS4   | High                    |
| <b>G</b>    | Identify and promote the availability, location and requirements of facilities for collection or disposal of household hazardous wastes, travel trailer sanitary wastes, chemicals, yard wastes, and motor vehicle fluids | Medium                  |
| <b>H</b>    | Inform and educate the public on proper septic system care and maintenance, and how to recognize system failure   | High                    |
| <b>I</b>    | Educate the public on, and promote the benefits of, green infrastructure and Low Impact Development   | Low                     |
| <b>J</b>    | Identify and educate commercial, industrial, and institutional entities likely to contribute pollutants to storm water runoff   | Low                     |

A measurable goal with a measure of evaluation is included for each PEP activity. As appropriate, a schedule for implementation (months and years), with interim milestones and the frequency of the BMP is also provided. In addition, for topics A - J the PEP identifies the following:

1. Target audience
2. Key message
3. Delivery mechanism
4. Year and frequency of BMP
5. Responsible party

#### **IV. OVERALL EVALUATION**

This PEP provides the procedure for evaluating and determining the effectiveness of the overall PEP. The procedure includes a method for assessing changes in public awareness and behavior resulting from the implementation of the PEP and the process for modifying the PEP to address ineffective implementation. The evaluation of the PEP will be done at the beginning of Year 5 of the MS4 Permit. The evaluation will use a Township official(s) and their consultant to review what has been completed during the permit cycle and how to improve or maintain the outreach and education of each activity in the future. If an activity needs to be modified it will be completed by changing the existing PEP and submitted within the next Permit Application period deadline.

When practicable, measurements of outcome (i.e. survey results from other NPDES communities or groups which indicate actual behavior change) will be incorporated into BMP evaluations. Other methods for evaluation can include public comment or feedback from the Township’s web presence or social media presence. These mechanisms can be useful in determining whether the education effort is reaching the intended audience; however, it is difficult to evaluate behavior change resulting from the education activity using these purely quantitative methods.

## V. PROGRESS REPORT

By the date indicated on the Erie Township (NPDES MS4 Certificate of Coverage (COC)), will submit to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) a Progress Report on the implementation status of its individual permit and the progress on pollution prevention. This report will include documentation of PEP efforts, a summary of the evaluation of its effectiveness when appropriate (e.g. survey results, public comments received), and any proposed revisions or amendments to the collaborative plan.

## VI. PROPOSED PUBLIC EDUCATION BMPs

The BMP activities to be implemented as part of this PEP are summarized below. Activities will be completed by the responsible parties noted in each activity description. Timelines for implementation of proposed activities extend from (year one) when implementation of the PEP begins to (year five) when the permit expires. The following activities will be focused on the HIGH priority items from Table 1 on page 5.

Examples of education materials for distribution or posting on a webpage can be found at:

[https://www.michigan.gov/egle/0,9429,7-135-3313\\_71618\\_3682\\_3714-106374--,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/egle/0,9429,7-135-3313_71618_3682_3714-106374--,00.html)

### Activity #1: Distribute Educational Materials

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Delivery Mechanism: | Utilize print and digital materials previously developed by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), Soil Conservation District, NRCS, EGLE, EPA, MCDC, and/or other watershed organizations, such as River Raisin. Materials will be distributed at the Township office, public events (if held), and on the Erie Township website. |
| Key Messages:       | A, B, C, F, H   |
| Target Audience:    | Residents, visitors, students, public employees, and businesses   |
| Year & Frequency:   | Materials will be available throughout the year for the duration of the five-year permit cycle.   |
| Goal:               | 10 pieces of printed materials distributed per year by the permittee or at least 25 web visits  |

Evaluation: Number of materials distributed and the location of where the materials were distributed  
Responsible Party: Erie Township

### **Activity #2: Provide Content for Township Website, Social Media**

Delivery Mechanism: Information will be developed and distributed to community members to keep them informed about ongoing watershed issues in the western Lake Erie basin, individual actions to protect water resources, and stewardship opportunities. Information on similar topics can also be included in the township newsletter and/or other types of notices mailed and/or emailed to community residents. Information will also be posted via social media tools, if the township uses social media in the future.

Key Messages: A, B, C, F, H  
Target Audience: Residents, visitors, public employees, schools, businesses,  
Year & Frequency: Developed and distributed throughout the year and for the duration of the permit cycle  
Goal: Two (2) township newsletter articles per year (if published). 10 pieces of printed materials distributed per year or 25 web site visits.  
Evaluation: Frequency and number of articles, number of newsletters distributed, content of newsletters, type of social media tools used; content of messages  
Responsible Party: Erie Township

### **Activity #3: Display Water Quality Exhibits**

Delivery Mechanism: Provide water-quality and/or watershed themed exhibits and/or table-top displays at the Township offices or public event gathering places.

Key Messages: A, B, C, F, H  
Target Audience: Residents, visitors, public employees, schools, businesses.  
Year & Frequency: 1 display per permit cycle  
Goal: Erie Township to Contact the River Raisin watershed group to obtain a display once per permit cycle (five years);  
Evaluation: Period of time (dates and photo of exhibit) the exhibit is on display, location where exhibit is on display, content of exhibit topics which will be focused on the high priority items listed above  
Responsible Party: Erie Township

### **Activity #4: Promote MCDC Water Quality Hotline**

[https://www.co.monroe.mi.us/officials\\_and\\_departments/officials/drain\\_commission/index.php](https://www.co.monroe.mi.us/officials_and_departments/officials/drain_commission/index.php)

Delivery Mechanism: Promote the MCDC twenty-four (24) hour anonymous water quality hotline for reporting illicit discharges and pollution problems on the Township Web Site.

Key Messages: C  
Target Audience: Residents, public employees, and businesses

Year & Frequency: Ongoing throughout permit cycle  
Goal: Link on Township web site to MCDC spill reporting number.  
Evaluation: Maintain the link to MCDC.  
Responsible Party: Erie Township

**Activity #5: Water Quality Presentations or Outreach**

For more information; <https://www.riverraisin.org/>

Delivery Mechanism: Facilitate presentations which teach about current watershed/stormwater issues, water pollution sources and solutions to these impacts. Place on social media or community calendar any free presentations such as Earth Day, River Raisin Water Festival, River Cleanups in Monroe County to the township residents.

Key messages: A, B, C, F, H

Target Audience: Residents, visitors, public employees, and businesses.

Year & Frequency: Ongoing throughout permit cycle

Goal: 1 facilitation every two years or advertise at least 1 event per year on community calendar, such as Earth Day, River Raisin Water Festival.

Evaluation: Link event on social media or community calendar.

Responsible Party: Erie Township