2024 Municipal Stormwater Permits Ad Hoc Dialogs

Background

During the 2019 MS4 Permit reissuance development process, an ad hoc group of western Washington permittees and other interested stakeholders explored if and how a more collaborative approach may lead to better Permits and stronger working relationships among stakeholders, including Ecology. What emerged was a collaborative group of multiple subgroup stakeholder dialogs that became known as the Ad Hoc process. It provided an opportunity to:

- Develop a shared understanding of the Permit language's purpose.
- Identify and suggest changes to the Permit that may result in substantial improvements.
- Build a more productive relationship among stormwater stakeholders, and with Ecology.

Late May 2021, Ecology expressed interest in resurrecting the Ad Hoc effort to help inform reissuance of the 2024 western WA permits.

Proposed Ad Hoc Process Ground Rules

- The Phase I and Phase II Western WA Municipal Stormwater Permits are Ecology's to write, with associated legal responsibilities and a regulatory process they must follow. These ad hoc dialogs are advisory and do not supersede or circumvent any Ecology process.
- This is an open and transparent process where everyone is welcome to participate.
- Participation does not prevent or preclude any participant from directly submitting separate ideas or comments to Ecology or pursuing the formal Permit appeal process.
- Topic Groups will strive to develop a share understanding and set of recommendations. In the event a shared vision is not reached, the Topic Group white papers will provide the range of perspectives as well as an indication of the level of support for those various perspectives.
- Where appropriate, formation of Topic Groups will take advantage of existing regional forums like STORM and ROADMAP to organize topic discussions.

Structure and Roles

- The Plenary Ad Hoc Group (PAHG):
    - Helps function as the "umbrella" organizing conduit and is open to all. Washington Stormwater Center provides a "virtual" meeting and information-sharing platform to support all discussions.
    - This group can serve as a resource to coordinate the various outreach and engagement efforts.
    - The Ad Hoc group does not have the authority to make edits to any work products from the Topic Groups other than format and grammar changes.
- Ad Hoc Topic Groups:
    - Discuss specific topics on technical- or policy-specific issues.
    - Run themselves - designate a lead/co-leads, schedule own meetings.
    - Are responsible for writing their own white papers.
    - Present on and share Permit suggestions they have developed at a "confluence meeting" of the Ad Hoc Group (see proposed schedule below).
    - Provide Ecology permit writers with specific suggestions for their consideration in crafting the 2024 Phase I and Phase II Western WA Municipal Stormwater Permits by submitting the Topic Groups white papers.

- Topic Group Co-Leads:
    - Ensure that all topic group discussions are scheduled and communicated to interested parties.
    - Ensure that groundrules are followed in meetings and communications.
    - Ensure topic group white paper is completed on time.
- Ad Hoc Organizing Committee:
    - Schedules, organizes and supports PAHG meetings (Kick-off and Confluence). Develops meeting agendas, process ground rules.
    - Collects and organizes discussion topic recommendations. Prepares optional white paper template.
    - Interacts with permittees, interested stakeholders, and Ecology throughout process.
    - Orients new participants as they become involved in Ad Hoc Process.
    - Open membership. Current representatives from Thurston County, King County, City of Redmond, Skagit County.

Proposed Ad Hoc Process Schedule

July – September 2021
- Present concept and schedule to regional groups and develop list of topics, participants, and level of participation. Develop a list of stakeholders

September
- Respond to a survey from the Washington Stormwater Center, using a developed stakeholder list, to refine list of discussion topics, identify possible roles in the topic groups.
- Draft 2024 structure and ground rules.
- (Possibly) Prepare recommended white paper template.

October 2021 Plenary Ad Hoc Group (PAHG) Kickoff – full group meeting (via Teams)
- Discuss process + timeline
- Approve/advance Draft 2024 structure and ground rules
- Identify, hone, and prioritize topic areas
- Identify topic group leads/co-leads, time allowing
- Ecology to share what they will do with the products; help us push toward agreement/shared vision

Mid-October 2021
- Form Topic Groups & initiate Topic Group discussions

Mid-January 2022
- Topic Group white paper recommendations submitted to PAHG to prepare for final report out meeting

Late January 2022 – PAHG Confluence Meeting (via Teams)
- Participation by all the Topic Groups
- Presentation and discussion of the various Topic Group ideas

Late February 2022
- Submit Topic Group white papers to Ecology