

SANILAC COUNTY, MICHIGAN

# Public Education Plan

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October 2016

**National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Application  
for Discharge of Stormwater to Surface Waters from a Municipal  
Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4)**

SANILAC COUNTY

SANILAC COUNTY'S CORRESPONDING AGENCIES:

VILLAGE OF LEXINGTON  
SANILAC COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **Public Education Plan Purpose**

It is the vision of Sanilac County, including the Village of Lexington and the Sanilac County Road Commission agencies, to increase the general public and business community's knowledge fulfilling the requirements found within the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Application for the Application for Discharge of Stormwater to Surface Waters from a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). The purpose of the Public Education Plan (PEP) is to promote and integrate a watershed education program that the public can be well-informed upon including practices that can be incorporated into daily activities to protect the coastal water resources and to reduce and/or prevent polluted stormwater discharges. To improve storm water quality discharged into receiving waters, the Sanilac County agencies intend to promote watershed education in the Urbanized Area as detailed in its Public Education Plan.

The Public Education Plan provides the assessment of the ten (10) required topics found within the five-year term permit application, which can be seen below in *Table 1. Required Elements of the Public Education Plan (PEP)*. Found within this PEP are current and proposed Best Management Practice (BMP) activities, designed specifically for Sanilac County, that are required to meet the minimum control measure requirements. It is the agencies of Sanilac County's goal to be better stewards of the small coastal watersheds in the Sanilac County Urbanized Area, to improve storm water quality discharging to Lake Huron, and to inform and educate the public on reducing and/or preventing stormwater pollution, illicit discharges and spills.

It is the goal of this Public Education Plan to raise awareness and knowledge among residents, public employees, businesses, industries, developers, contractors, construction crews and visitors of Sanilac County's coastal urbanized area. The objective of Sanilac County's PEP is to improve, educate, and increase the number of individuals and organizations participating in watershed education and daily activities that impact stormwater quality.

## **II. WATERSHED PARTNERING AGENCIES**

This Public Education Plan was created for the collaboration between the agencies of the Village of Lexington and the Sanilac County Road Commission within Sanilac County. It should be noted that the watershed group in this county is currently not active, but the Village of Lexington and the Sanilac County Road Commission will participate when this group becomes active. Efforts will be made for both facilities to cooperate with other local and county agencies which have similar or shared goals within Sanilac County.

Public education is an essential and cost-effective approach to prevent polluted stormwater discharges and an efficient way to involve the community to participate in environmentally safe daily practices and activities. It is the responsibility of the Village of Lexington and the Sanilac County Road Commission to be fully aware of this Public Education Plan collaboration. Furthermore, these agencies must assume responsibility, financial costs, and leadership roles for

ensuring the implementation of this PEP. If any additional changes are to be made and/or further items to be initiated and implemented, it is the responsibility of both agencies to meet and discuss collaboratively before any modifications are put into practice.

### **III. REQUIRED ELEMENTS**

In order to achieve a successful and efficient program to promote and educate the public to improve the quality of storm water discharged into receiving waters, the agencies of Sanilac County shall have a program to describe proposed Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be intertwined within the public to raise awareness and knowledge of the County's watershed.

This Public Education Plan outlines the ten (10) public education topics, listed as topics A-J in Table 1. below, found within the five-year term permit application that are prioritized as high, medium, or low based on the assigned priority level. A BMP activity, or multiple BMPs, targeting each topic includes identification of the following aspects: the key audience that will be targeted in the activity, the key message the County wants to relate to the public, the delivery mechanism in which to relay the key message, the year and frequency the BMP activity will be implemented, and the responsible party of whom will conduct each activity.

#### **Prioritizing Topics Listed in the PEP**

As requested in the permit application, each required permit element topic must have an assigned priority level of either low, medium, or high. To do such assigning, one must take into account of the following: reviewing if a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is established in the watershed, how effective each Public Education Plan topic would or should be, how beneficial and important each topic would be per location or event, and how each topic would apply. Each PEP topic will be closely analyzed to determine how effective and well-suited each activity would be after implementation and the effect each have on impacting the public's knowledge on watershed educational practices. Furthermore, Sanilac County's agencies will review and possibly look into the implementation of comments and feedback from the public, employ realistic goals and look into future programs, activities and available funds. In each activity the priority level is posted for each topic in the following chart. The chart reflects the order as shown in the permit application, not the priority level.

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

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>PUBLIC EDUCATION PLAN TOPIC</b>	<b>PRIORITY RANKING</b>
<b>A</b>	Promote public responsibility and stewardship in the applicant's watershed(s).	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 materials and procedures for car, pavement, and power washing.	MEDIUM
<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, 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.	LOW
<b>I</b>	Educate the public on, and promote 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 stormwater runoff.	LOW

**IV. PROPOSED BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

The proposed Best Management Practices will be implemented in regards to the required elements of this Public Education Plan. Each activity will have a corresponding evaluation that will vary depending on the specific goal(s) each is expected to meet. This evaluation can be helpful with determining if the BMP is worthwhile, or effective, with the goal of educating the public on reducing and/or preventing pollutants to stormwater discharges.

With regards to the specific timeline and the year in which each activity should be practiced and implemented, a maximum allotted time is five years, or when the NPDES permit expires, and a minimum timeframe is as soon as the permit is issued. The designated timeline can vary and fluctuate depending on evaluations, feedback and how effective each activity is at meeting the required (10) ten elements listed in Table 1.

**Activity #1: Public Reporting "Hot Line"**

<u>Delivery Mechanism:</u>	Promote and maintain a 24-hour specific "Hot Line" number to call for the Road Commission and the Village of Lexington, or a generalized contact number for both areas, with an after-hours message to call 911 for emergencies and to leave a message for non-emergencies.
<u>Key Messages:</u>	Topic C, HIGH Priority
<u>Target Audience:</u>	Residents, public employees, businesses, industries, visitors, contractors, developers, etc.
<u>Year &amp; Frequency:</u>	Ongoing throughout the duration of the NPDES permit.
<u>Measurable Goal:</u>	Regular maintenance and update of the pollution hotline and keep a record of the number of complaints per year and what they entail.
<u>Evaluation:</u>	Number of calls that are made to the number, nature of the complaints and follow-up actions.
<u>Responsibility Party:</u>	Sanilac County Agencies: Village of Lexington, Sanilac County Road Commission.

**Activity #2: Educational Materials and Messages**

<u>Delivery Mechanism:</u>	Messages, mail, brochure(s), flyer (s), activity book (s), print and/or digital material will be developed or adapted to communicate to the general public about their responsibility in keeping the watershed and water resources clean. The message could include defining what a watershed is and advise the public on the area watersheds, how they impact watersheds, and ten things they can do to help clean up the watershed. The Sanilac County agencies will also look at and assess any educational program developed by the State, professional organizations, or other interested parties that can effectively communicate a message that increases the general public's knowledge regarding stewardship of the watershed they reside in. Existing resources will be utilized when appropriate (e.g. SEMCOG website or materials such as the following seven simple steps to clean water: car care, fertilizer
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usage, household waste, landscaping, pet care, save/conserves/re-use water, and storm drain care).

Key Messages:

Topics A-J.

HIGH PRIORITY: A, B, C, F  
MEDIUM PRIORITY: D, E, G  
LOW PRIORITY: H, I, J

Target Audience:

Residents, public employees, contractors, developers, businesses, industries, students, visitors, etc.

Year & Frequency:

Ongoing throughout the duration of the NPDES permit.

Measurable Goal:

10 pieces of materials distributed per year per permittee. (Possible of placing the material on the websites or include links to necessary documents.)

Evaluation:

Quantity of materials distributed each year, number of hits to the website to download material. When practicable and applicable, surveys will be implemented.

Responsibility Party:

Sanilac County Agencies: Village of Lexington, Sanilac County Road Commission.

**Activity #3: Conduct Seminars and Water Quality Presentations**

Delivery Mechanism:

Conduct presentations that integrate "Table-Top Displays" which educate the public about current watershed issues, water quality issues, steps and actions each individual can take to reduce pollution to water resources, how people can become more involved on their own and within their community and how they can stay up-to-date with news, messages and current issues. Furthermore, the public can be informed on the status of their water resources and the way everyday activities can pose a threat.

Key Messages:

Topics A-J.

HIGH PRIORITY: A, B, C, F  
MEDIUM PRIORITY: D, E, G  
LOW PRIORITY: H, I, J

Target Audience:

Residents, students, public employees, contractors, developers, businesses, industries, etc.

Year & Frequency:

Ongoing throughout the duration of the NPDES permit.

Measurable Goal: Approximately 2 presentations per year between the two agencies (Village of Lexington and Sanilac County Road Commission).

Evaluation: The number of presentations given, the number of individuals whom attended each presentation and the number of short surveys after each presentation, if applicable.

Responsibility Party: Sanilac County Agencies: Village of Lexington, Sanilac County Road Commission.

**Activity #4: Conduct Table-Top Exhibit Displays**

Delivery Mechanism: Participate in public events and/or public facilities in which Table-Top Exhibit Displays are utilized to portray to the public of related water resource activities, current happenings within their watershed and public efforts that could be made to daily activities to reduce and/or prevent pollutants in stormwater runoff.

*The SCRC uses a free standing display. Possible locations for exhibit displays include, but not limited to, the following: The Lexington Village Community Center Moore Public Library, Sanilac County Career Center, Sanilac County Courthouse, Sandusky High School Library, Spring Showcase at the fairgrounds, School Tours at the Thumb Octagon Barn, Sanilac 4H Fair, Project RED at the fairgrounds.*

Key Messages: Topics A-J.  
HIGH PRIORITY: A, B, C, F  
MEDIUM PRIORITY: D, E, G  
LOW PRIORITY: H, I, J

Target Audience: Residents, students, public employees, businesses, industries, etc.

Year & Frequency: Ongoing throughout the duration of the NPDES permit.

Measurable Goal: Approximately 1 display per year per permittee.

Evaluation: The number of events the table-top exhibit is displayed at, the number of individuals able to see the display, if applicable.

Responsibility Party: Sanilac County Agencies: Village of Lexington, Sanilac County Road Commission.



**Activity #5: Public Festivals, Community Events, Local Outreach**

Delivery Mechanism: Participate in public events, public festivities, festivals, community events, and county-wide environmental water themed-education events, local farmer’s markets or other similar related events.

*Possible events include, but not limited to, the following (with the usual month the event occurs) to use a display for public watershed education: Earth Day and Arbor Day (April), Lexington in Bloom (May), Tierney Park Clean-Up (May, usually), Moore Public Library Book Sale (August), Lexington Fine Arts Street Fair (August), Lexington Heritage Days (September), Helping Hands Craft/Vender Show (September), etc.*

Key Messages: Topics A-J.  
  
HIGH PRIORITY: A, B, C, F  
MEDIUM PRIORITY: D, E, G  
LOW PRIORITY: H, I, J

Target Audience: Residents, students, public employees, businesses, industries, etc.

Year & Frequency: Ongoing throughout the duration of the NPDES permit.

Measureable Goal: Attend approximately 2 events total per year. Provide a picture of the display.

Evaluation: The number of individuals who attend each event, and when practicable and applicable, surveys.

Responsibility Party: Sanilac County Agencies: Village of Lexington, Sanilac County Road Commission.

**Activity #6: Social Media and Website Accessibility**

Delivery Mechanism: Provide accessible social media tools and website accessibility. Information such as what is going on in the watershed, what individuals can do to protect their water resources and how they can be more involved may be developed and included for the website and social media sources. Current news and immediate issues can also be posted and included along with any upcoming events the public should be aware of.

*Village of Lexington website: <http://www.villageoflexington.com/>*

Sanilac County Road Commission website: <http://sanilacroads.com/>

<u>Key Messages:</u>	Topics A-J.  HIGH PRIORITY: A, B, C, F MEDIUM PRIORITY: D, E, G LOW PRIORITY: H, I, J
<u>Target Audience:</u>	Residents, students, public employees, businesses, industries, etc.
<u>Year &amp; Frequency:</u>	Ongoing throughout the duration of the NPDES permit.
<u>Measurable Goal:</u>	Document the website hits each year and 1 article in local handouts per year, whether it be found within a newsletter or incorporated within a newspaper or flyer.
<u>Evaluation:</u>	Evaluate effectiveness of these social media tools and website accessibility by reviewing the content of these sources, the type of social media which was used and the number of website hits that were made per year. Incorporate a public comment section on the website or include a phone number on social media tools to report any comments. Evaluate the number of website hits each year to document progress.
<u>Responsibility Party:</u>	Sanilac County Agencies: Village of Lexington, Sanilac County Road Commission.

## V. EVALUATIONS AND PROGRESS REPORTS

A variety of mechanisms are described in the “Evaluation” of each of the PEP’s individual activities. Evaluation of accumulated measures of the effectiveness of the PEP’s individual activities can be categorized in terms of output (i.e. effort or activity) that measures short-term goals and milestones. Examples of output measurements include tracking web site hits or the number of literature pieces distributed to a target audience. When practicable, measurements of outcome (i.e. survey results that indicate actual behavior change) will be incorporated into BMP evaluations. Such measures are expected to include public comment and feedback and level of participation in programs and events. These mechanisms can be useful in determining whether the education effort is reaching the audience; however, it is difficult to evaluate behavior change resulting from the education activity using these purely quantitative methods.

The PEP will be revisited to determine what changes could be implemented to increase the communication efficiency of the program. Changes made within the Public Education Plan will be presented for public awareness, comment and feedback. This will increase the use and visibility of these existing and proposed efforts put forth in this document. Future efforts to expand and improve the public education activities will be performed to the **maximum extent practicable** by the County of Sanilac including the agencies of the Village of Lexington and the Sanilac County Road Commission.

Progress Reports for evaluation and determining the effectiveness of the overall Public Education Plan will be submitted to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) by the date listed on the permit. These Progress Reports will include the status of each BMP activity and the overall effectiveness each had on improving storm water quality discharging to Lake Huron and informing and educating the public on reducing and/or preventing stormwater pollution, illicit discharges and spills. Furthermore, documentation and summaries of the efforts made by the agencies of Sanilac County to increase public awareness, revisions of the current Public Education Plan and any documents used throughout the implementation of the plan, and any additional efforts that need to be incorporated for future usage will all be included.