

A Plan to Protect Our Natural Resources

In August 2007, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) required operators of certain small municipal storm sewer systems to obtain a permit for their storm water discharges into rivers, lakes, and streams. These new requirements affect many small, publicly-owned storm sewer systems located within an urbanized area (defined by the 2000 U.S. Census as an area of higher population density near a city) and are designed for the protection of our natural resources. Williamson-Travis Counties Municipal Utility District #1 (District), which is located in the Cedar Park Urbanized Area and within the contribution zone of the Edwards Aquifer, falls under this definition and is therefore required to comply with the TCEQ's permitting regulations.

In order to simplify compliance for small municipalities such as the District, the state issued, via the TCEQ, a general permit for Storm Water Discharges from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (called MS4s). The District drafted a plan and submitted the required documents to seek coverage under the TCEQ's general permit. Conditions of the general permit require that the District develop a Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) that includes Best Management Practices (BMPs) to address six Minimum Control Measures (MCMs). These MCMs are:

- Public Education and Outreach
- Public Involvement and Participation
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Construction Site Storm Water Runoff Control
- Post-Construction Storm Water Management for New Development and Redevelopment, and
- Pollution Prevention / Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

The SWMP adopted by the District (which will be gradually implemented over the next five years) meets the requirements of the general permit but is flexible enough for the District to choose the most effective and cost-efficient methods for the prevention of storm water pollution. To track compliance, the District is also required to submit an annual report to the TCEQ detailing what has been implemented and how that compares to the previously adopted SWMP.

Residents of the District will have an opportunity to participate in the implementation of the SWMP. Activities will include, but will not be limited to: neighborhood collection and recycling of household wastes (especially plastics, glass, and metals) and the proper disposal of hazardous waste, such as motor oil, paint cans, and fuel (items often thrown away or poured down storm drains). You will be notified when details have been worked out.

The District also encourages residents to share their own ideas for keeping our waterways pollutant-free. Please contact Severn Trent Services at 246-0498.

Look for updates on the progression of these programs in future bills and on the website www.wtcmud1.org.

Did you know...

The water going down storm drains is not treated; instead it makes its way to the Brazos River via Brushy Creek. Any chemicals, oils or debris have the potential to kill fish on the way.