

MS4 Management & Support Services

Montgomery County, Maryland



A comprehensive strategy crafted around a new Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit helps one of the most populous counties of the National Capital Region become a water quality leader.

Located just north of Washington, DC, Montgomery County, Maryland is home to more than one million people. In 2010, the County, which drains to the Chesapeake Bay, was issued one of the most stringent Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permits in the nation. The five-year permit, which was negotiated with the U.S. EPA and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) complies with the EPA's NPDES regulations requiring large, urban jurisdictions to control pollution from stormwater runoff to the maximum extent practicable. Major new provisions of the permit include:

- Requiring additional stormwater management for 20% of impervious surfaces

- Developing and implementing measurable strategies to reduce trash
- Developing implementation plans and timelines to meet regulatory pollution limits for water quality standards

In a joint partnership with Brown and Caldwell, Biohabitats has been leading a team of stormwater and marketing consultants to assist the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to refine an implementation framework for the MS4 Permit.

The Permit requires development of a Countywide Coordinated Implementation Strategy (CCIS) to meet watershed restoration goals and water quality standards. It also

requires the County to evaluate its codes, regulations, standards, policies, and planning process, and develop recommendations to implement Environmental Site Design (ESD) to the maximum extent practicable. Biohabitats was lead consultant and co-author with DEP staff of the County's CCIS.

This strategy emphasizes fixing damaged streams, improving water quality, and addressing historical damage caused by urban stormwater pollution. DEP's existing watershed restoration efforts are a regulatory requirement of the County's NPDES MS4 Permit.

Having provided the County with more than a decade of related services, such as stream restoration assessment, design, and construction oversight; development of interagency codes for stormwater management; development of guidelines for stormwater

pilots such as raingardens, rain barrels and cisterns, and permeable paving; and capital improvement project identification and prioritization throughout seven watersheds, Biohabitats brought a deep understanding to the MS4 Management contract.

To date, Biohabitats' work for this two-year base contract (with three possible one-year extensions) has included refining the design process and oversight of eight water resources engineering firms, separately contracted with the County; implementing assessments of five watersheds to identify and prioritize MS4 project opportunities; developing a business management dashboard to track progress of key program performance indicators; supporting Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) efforts; and developing a framework for refining GIS-based stormdrain delineations throughout the County.

conservation planning
ecological restoration
regenerative design



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