SOUTHEAST METRO STORMWATER AUTHORITY

Environmental/Ecological On-Call Services

Centennial, Colorado

Biohabitats is using an effective mix of engineering, ecology, and landscape architecture to help SEMSWA bring habitat and community involvement into their stormwater management activities.

Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority

Fact Sheet on Standard Operating Procedure

Use of Volunteers for Planting

Why

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are prepared for SEMSWA activities that will assist with timely and efficient completion of compliant projects and provide a mechanism for training. One of the goals is to provide time-tested, generally accepted routine procedures for staff to follow. This Fact Sheet provides an overview of the SOP.

What

Volunteer Planting and Monitoring Volunteers can be used for the installation of vegetation and follow-up monitoring observation on SEMSWA projects. This activity applies to appropriate projects in both the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Operations and Maintenance (O&M) programs. Partnerships with organizations, such as the Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners, that is capable of assisting the work. It is important that all volunteer projects conducted under the auspices of SEMSWA are conducted safely, produce tangible benefits to SEMSWA waterways, and give volunteers satisfaction in contributing to the community.

How

DO

Identify volunteer projects as far in advance as possible, preferably before final design. Consider using volunteers for installation of containerized plantings and live stakes or branches, mulching, seeding, installation of erosion control matting, weeding, and follow-up vegetative monitoring observation

Base project selection on the availability of a partner organization to lead volunteer recruitment and coordination. SEMSWA's main role will be to provide the project site and planting plans along with technical expertise.

Set project goals that are clear and measurable.

For identified projects, make sure that the contract agreement between SEMSWA and the design consultant includes the creation of a clear and readily-understandable planting plan for use by volunteers as well as sufficient hours to provide technical expertise for plant installation and follow-up observation

Coordinate with the partner organization and work together to take care of details: scheduling, volunteer recruitment, work activities and materials, safety plan, food selection, educational talk, tool management, crew leader preparation, and follow-up observation monitoring.

Match the skill and age of the volunteers with the appropriate activity.

Care for volunteer safety and well-being by providing appropriate instruction and ensuring that the project area and work activity are safe.

Have a back up plan in case of inclement weather or incomplete work.

Refer to the SCP for detail on project team members and responsibilities and required structures and equipment.

Celebrate the volunteer and partner organization contributions to the community.

Who

SEMSWA employees and contracted companies responsible for use of Volunteers in Planting and Monitoring.

Where

SEMSWA stormwater facilities and projects that require revegetation and are appropriate for volunteers.

DON'T

DO NOT plan on using volunteers for projects lacking a partner organization. A partner organization is vital, particularly for leading volunteer recruitment and coordination.

DO NOT forget to consider the follow-up observational monitoring during project planning.

DO NOT leave volunteers unsupervised.

DO NOT allow volunteer use of tools which require special strength and training or use of chemicals.

Southern Denver's Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority (SEMSWA) is actively assisting these communities to better understand operations and practices associated with stormwater projects. As part of an on-call contract to provide SESMSWA with ecological services, Biohabitats developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for U.S. Clean Water Act 404 permitting for its maintenance projects. The project provided guidelines determining permit needs, protocols and contacts for particular projects. It also included consideration of Endangered Species Act requirements related to 404 permitting. Biohabitats prepared a related fact sheet for reference and training.

Biohabitats also developed an SOP for utilizing volunteers to re-vegetate and assess vegetation at SEMSWA construction sites along riparian and wetland areas. This SOP covered items such as the type of projects appropriate for volunteer use and the different roles and responsibilities necessary for effective volunteer projects. Biohabitats worked closely with the Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners, who served as the example project partner with SEMSWA, to coordinate volunteer groups and maintenance activities. Biohabitats developed a brief and simple assessment method for volunteers to use in following up revegetation efforts and monitoring post-construction health of wetland and riparian areas.

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