Central Massachusetts Regional Stormwater Coalition

What is it and how does it work?

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John R. Woodsmall, III, P.E.
Director of Public Works
Holden, MA

Co-Chairman
CMRSWC
What is the CMRSWC?

- Group of 30 Cities & Towns With a Common Purpose and Similar Needs and Resources
- Encouraging Cooperation Between Neighboring Communities
- Sharing of Resources to the Benefit of All Members
- We Are All in This Together...
Why a Coalition?

- Access to Technical and Management Resources
- Educating the Public About Their MS4
- Implementing Permit Requirements
- Documenting Efforts and Submitting Regulatory Reports
- 250+ Cities and Towns Dealing with Stormwater—Really How Different is Stormwater?

Common Factor to those Challenges: $$$$$$
CMRSWC Communities

Ashland
Auburn
Charlton
Dudley
Fitchburg
Framingham
Grafton
Holden
Hopkinton
Leicester
Lunenburg
Marlborough
Millbury
Natick
Northborough

Northbridge
Oxford
Palmer
Paxton
Rutland
Shrewsbury
Southborough
Southbridge
Spencer
Sterling
Sturbridge
Upton
Uxbridge
West Boylston
Westborough
History

• Began with Partnerships Between Towns of Leicester and Spencer-Common Watershed
• Formed in 2012 with 13-Towns, Financed by a State Grant of $300,000
• Additional Grant in 2013 of $200,000, Expanded to 30+ Towns and Cities
• Formal Bylaws and Governing Structure in September, 2016
2016 MS4 Permit

- Massachusetts and New Hampshire Are Non-Delegated States...EPA Runs the Permit Process
- Originally Was to Become Effective on July 1, 2017
- Due to Legal Appeals (both MA & NH), was Postponed for 1-Year
- Became Effective on July 1, 2018 (despite no resolution to legal appeals)
- Stricter Requirements in All Facets of the Permit
Challenges

• Getting 30(+) Different MA Cities & Towns to Agree
• Coordinating the Consultants, and Administrative and Technical Staff of the Towns
• Accommodating the Budget Resources of Each Town
  • Annual membership “dues”
• Everyone Needs to Get Something
• Turnover in Membership
• New Permit!
CMRSWC Partners

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Massachusetts Department of Revenue (MassDOR)
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
- Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MassDCR)
- Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI)
- Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)
- Massachusetts Coalition for Water Resource Stewardship (MCWRS)
- Other Regional Stormwater Coalitions
- All Have Provided Help & Guidance, Educational Materials, & Labor
Current Work

- Provided Notice of Intent Workshops for Members
  - Each community had opportunity to have NOI completed at the workshop-avoid paying for consultants
- Developing Stormwater Management Plan Workshops for Submittals Due in June, 2019
- Working with Other MA Stormwater Coalitions on Common Education Messages
  - Think Blue Massachusetts!
Past Work

- Website for All Members
- Standard Operating Procedures
- GIS Mapping and Data Forms
- Branding
- Equipment Sharing
- WPI Project Sponsorships
- Creation of Partnerships with State and Federal Agencies
- Speak with One Voice
Past Work (cont.)

- Help Fund MS4 Legal Appeal
- Help Form MA Statewide Stormwater Coalition
- Developed and Hosted Numerous Workshops
  - Designed and Conducted by Consultants
  - Numerous Videos and Educational Materials Created
Lessons Learned

- Need Core Group to Set Goals and Put Ideas into Action
- Steering Committee
  - Sub-Committees (Education, Technical, Legislative)
- Everyone Needs to Get “Something” From Their Membership
- Helps to Have Diverse Backgrounds-
  Administrators/Managers, Conservation Agents, Planners, Engineers, DPW/Highway Superintendents
Lessons Learned (cont.)

- Consultants are Great Partners
  - Want the Work and the Recognition of being Affiliated with Groups
- Dues are Crucial to Keep Program Moving (Use it or Lose it)
- Great Avenue for Developing & Distributing Public Education Messages
  - Stormwater has Common Pollutants to All Communities
  - Think Blue Massachusetts
Lessons Learned (cont.)

- State Agencies Want You to Succeed
  - Provide Staff, Expertise, and Advise
  - Grant $$$$ too
- No Need to Re-Invent the Wheel
  - Stormwater is Stormwater is Stormwater
Future Challenges and Unknowns

• Increased Regulatory Burden On:
  • Drinking water
  • Wastewater treatment discharges
  • Stormwater management

• New Permit Requirements = More Costs
• DEP Taking On NPDES Permitting Primacy?
• Competition for Limited Municipal Resources
  • Stormwater utilities??
What Next?

- CMRSWC Needs to Continue to Partner with Other Coalitions and the State and Federal Agencies
- Need to Educate Not Just the Public, But Local Officials on the Reasons for Additional Efforts & Costs
- Create Partnerships with Environmental Groups Where Possible
  - All are working towards same goal, how can we get there cooperatively?
- How to Pay?
What Next? (cont.)

- Continue to Advocate for Integrated Planning & Permitting by the EPA & DEP
- Advocate for Realistic Permit Requirements
  - Be prepared to push back via permit appeals and lawsuits
- Continue Pooling of Resources and Talents of Member Communities
Questions?

http://centralmastormwater.org
https://www.thinkbluemassachusetts.org/
Twitter: @MAStormH2O

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jwoodsmall@holdenma.gov