



City of Santa Barbara
Parks and Recreation Department

Memorandum

DATE: Feb 16, 2022

TO: Creeks Restoration/Water Quality Improvement Program
Citizen Advisory Committee

FROM: Jim Rumbley, Project Planner

SUBJECT: **Storm Water Management Program Report**

COMMITTEE DIRECTION – FOR DISCUSSION

That the Committee receive a presentation about the City's Storm Water Management Program.

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The Federal Clean Water Act regulates storm water discharges from municipalities that operate storm drain systems. The State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board), and the Regional Water Quality Control Boards, are responsible for implementation of the federal regulations in California. The City's Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) is a set of policies and rules detailed in a document called the General Permit, which was written and issued by the State Water Board. The Program's primary goal is to reduce pollutants that are discharged to the creeks and ocean through the City's storm drain system.

The Creeks Division provides overall coordination and administration of the SWMP, and submits annual reports that demonstrate compliance with the General Permit to the Water Board. The most recent annual report was submitted to the Water Board in October 2021 and documented the City's successful program management and effectiveness across all program components.

Program Components and Permit Requirements

1. Construction Site Storm Water Runoff Control – The permit and the City's Municipal Code require construction projects proposing any soil disturbance to employ storm water runoff control measures. The City's Building and Safety Division requires these

development projects to submit erosion and sediment control plans to comply with the SWMP and to prevent sediment pollution from entering the creeks and ocean. Erosion and sediment control plans indicate the type (sediment basins, sand/gravel bags, silt fences, straw rolls, and erosion control blankets) and location of the erosion control devices on the development site.

Building and Safety staff must complete permit mandated training related to reviewing erosion and sediment control plans and site inspection. Staff are also required to maintain a construction site inventory of all current construction projects and maintain inspection records for current projects that have erosion and sediment control plans.

Last fiscal year, the Building and Safety Division reviewed erosion and sediment control plans for 390 construction projects. In addition, they conducted 710 erosion control inspections and issued 161 correction notices at 222 separate building permit sites.

2. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination – The objective of this program element is to identify and eliminate sources of water pollution to the City’s streets, storm drains, creeks, and ocean. The Creeks Division employs a Code Enforcement Officer that investigates reports of water pollution, ensures pollution is cleaned-up, and coordinates removal of items illegally dumped in the creek.

Permit requirements related to illicit discharge detection and elimination include creating an inventory of commercial/industrial facilities that require discharge permits, mapping the location where storm drains spill into creeks, training all City field staff to recognize illicit discharges, and creating/following the City’s Enforcement Response Plan.

Last fiscal year, 100% of the 116 reports of illicit discharges were investigated on the same day that the report was received. In addition, 112,081 lbs. of trash was removed from the City’s creeks and beaches in clean-ups.

3. Outreach – The Creeks Division employs a full-time Outreach and Education Coordinator who manages outreach efforts related to creek and ocean water quality. This includes developing media campaigns, providing youth education, coordinating volunteer opportunities, informing the community about creek restoration and water quality improvement projects, hosting the annual Creek Week celebration, and tabling at community events.

The 22nd Annual Creek Week celebration took place in September, with the Creeks Division hosting a tour of the Upper Arroyo Burro Restoration at Barger Canyon, an online presentation on microplastics in our storm water, and a storm drain chalk art contest. The TikTok inspired “We’re All the Solution to Water Pollution” outreach campaign continues on local television and radio stations, online, and on the interiors of the full fleet of MTD buses. The Outreach Coordinator will work with a contractor to conduct a public awareness survey in 2023, which is required once during each five year permit, and results will be presented to the City’s Creeks Advisory Committee upon completion.

4. Post-construction Storm Water Treatment – The Planning Division, Building and Safety Division, and Creeks Division review development projects to ensure pollutants are removed from storm water falling on impermeable areas (e.g. roofs, driveways, patios, and walkways) before the water enters the storm drain system. To achieve pollutant removal from storm water, many development projects are required to install and maintain treatment/infiltration improvements such as permeable pavers, bioswales, infiltration basins and bioretention planters. The City has been successfully implementing post-construction storm water requirements for development projects since July 2008.

On January 12, 2021, the City Council adopted updates to the Storm Water BMP Guidance Manual and amendments to Chapter 22.87 of the Municipal Code. The changes made the program more flexible, equitable, and effective, as well as easier to understand, while also ensuring the City meets the Clean Water Act mandates. Many significant changes were made. Under the old (2013) requirements, project requirements (tiers) were dependent on land use type, geographic location, permit process, and project size. Now tiers are dependent only on the amount of new/replaced impervious area proposed. Also, storm water infiltration is now required for Tiers 2, 3, and 4 unless prohibitive due to site constraints. In addition, Tier 3 projects are now required to treat 95% of all impervious area instead of 100% under the old requirements, and the new Tier 4 level of compliance requires additional retention for large projects.

Last fiscal year, Creeks Division staff completed more than 800 project plan set reviews for compliance with post-construction requirements. Examples of recent projects that will comply with post-construction requirements include the new Police Station, Paseo Nuevo, the Zoo, Ortega Park, the Library, and the Modoc/Las Positas bike path.

5. Water Quality Monitoring – There are several research and monitoring efforts required for compliance with the General Permit. General Permit monitoring requirements are incorporated into the Creeks Division's Water Quality Research and Monitoring Plan, which is updated and approved by the Creeks Advisory Committee annually. Several monitoring activities are also contained within Monitoring Plans that have been approved by the Regional Board. The 303(d) Monitoring Plan includes monitoring water bodies that are listed on the Clean Water Act 303(d) list as impaired due to urban runoff. Monitoring includes testing creek water samples for fecal indicator bacteria and toxicity. The Special Studies Monitoring Plan includes quantification of the pollutant loads removed from storm water as a result of water quality improvement projects. Annual testing of flowing outfalls for a variety of pollutant indicators is required to detect illicit discharges and track long-term changes in water quality. The Permit also requires modeling of pollutant load reduction achieved by the program as a whole. A unique modeling effort, the Simple Santa Barbara Model, was developed by Creeks Division staff and approved by the Regional Board to meet this requirement in a cost-effective manner.

6. Trash Capture - This is an upcoming permit component. Staff anticipate that this will be a formal requirement included in the City's next 5 year permit. Once this requirement is included in the permit, the City will have until 2030 to implement full capture of trash greater than 5 millimeters within established priority areas. These priority areas include

all bus stops and commercial, industrial, mixed use, and high density residential areas of the City.

Next Steps

Creeks Division staff will continue to administer the Storm Water Management Program to ensure compliance with the General Permit requirements. This involves working with all City departments to verify that permit requirements are satisfied. Each year, after receiving summaries of how City departments satisfied the permit requirements, Creeks Division staff prepares and submits an annual report to the Water Board. The next report is due in October of 2022.

The current storm water Permit was only intended to last for five years (July 2013 through June 2018), and we are currently in Year 9. State Water Board staff are currently working on a replacement permit. The most recent estimate from Water Board staff is the new Permit will be adopted near the end of 2022. In the meantime, the City must continue to adhere to all requirements of the current Permit.

cc: Cameron Benson, Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager
Jill E. Zachary, Parks and Recreation Director