



Municipally Owned Vs. Operated Stormwater BMPs: What's The Difference?

The term 'municipally owned' are stormwater best management practices (BMPs) owned by the municipality and likely located on municipally owned property. Also referred to as public BMPs, these BMPs are required to be maintained by the municipality.

The term 'municipally operated' is used to define any privately owned BMPs the municipality has maintenance authority on (e.g., long-term maintenance agreement, easement agreement, etc.).

With maintenance authority on private BMPs, the municipality can ensure the private BMP is being inspected and maintained. Typically, private BMP owners should be inspecting their BMP per the long-term maintenance agreement. However, to ensure this is occurring, it's vital the municipality verifies this by requesting reports.



Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR



Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR

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City Of Greenfield: Private Stormwater Best Management Practices Education Efforts

Years ago, the city of Greenfield noticed that when the ownership of private stormwater best management practices (BMPs) transferred from the developer to the private landowner(s), it became unclear if the required BMP inspections and maintenance were occurring, as inspection and maintenance records could not be produced. To verify these required actions were occurring, the city determined that additional action was needed.

Starting in 2012, the city began providing reminders to private stormwater BMP owners. These reminders explained to private owners their responsibilities (e.g., required inspection and maintenance) and directed private owners to submit inspection and maintenance records to the city. By implementing this new procedure, the city began to understand when the required inspections and maintenance were occurring.

Since implementing this annual procedure, the submission of inspection and maintenance records has greatly increased. As shown in Table 1, when the city first began sending letters in 2012, its success rate was 21.9%. However, in 2023, it increased to 99.2%. Table 1 also shows the success rate has not always increased year to year. For example, in 2014, the success rate was 51.3%, but it dropped to 20% the following year.

By tracking and evaluating this data, the city understood how their procedures could improve. Consequently, in 2020, the city added language to its Storm Water Management Maintenance Agreements and Post Construction Storm Water Ordinance requiring the annual submittal of inspection and maintenance records to the city.

Additionally, in 2022, the city implemented a targeted education and outreach effort which targeted private BMP owners who are non-complaint or sporadic responders. As a result, the city experienced an increased response rate this past year.

Table 1. City Of Greenfield Inspection Report Response Rate.

Year	Private BMPs	Data received	% Returned
2012	73	16	21.9%
2013	75	13	17.3%
2014	76	39	51.3%
2015	80	16	20.0%
2016	95	31	32.6%
2017	110	79	71.8%
2018	113	88	77.9%
2019	105	87	82.9%
2020	109	92	84.4%
2021	112	101	90.2%
2022	122	117	95.9%
2023	133	132	99.2%

Targeted Education and Outreach Year

Spring Cleaning: Stormwater Best Management Practices

'April showers bring May flowers' indicates spring is on its way, and so is the rain. Therefore, it is a crucial time to implement a variety of different 'spring cleaning' BMPs to reduce or eliminate stormwater pollutants in your municipality's runoff in time for heavy rain events. Below are just a few examples of spring-cleaning activities:

Structural Stormwater BMP Inspections (retention ponds, infiltration basins, etc.)

Snowmelt events can carry debris and litter that may clog stormwater inlet structures. Maintaining BMP inlet structures so they are clear is important to avoid flooding and to ensure the stormwater BMP is functioning as designed. Inspecting stormwater BMPs after the winter season will help make sure the municipality's stormwater BMPs are ready for the rain. As a reminder, the MS4 Permit requires stormwater BMPs to be inspected at least once every five years.

Street Sweeping

When the snow melts, this can leave behind debris and other pollutants that have accumulated over the winter months. Street sweeping shortly after the snow melts or increasing the frequency of street sweeping during this timeframe can help get this material off the streets before a big rain event washes it to the nearest stormwater drains.

Spring Cleanup Events

Hosting spring cleanup volunteer events to pick up trash and other debris in your community helps keep our environment clean and assists in BMP function, but it can also count as a public involvement or education activity. Several cleanup events were held this past Earth Day (April 20, 2024) across the state of Wisconsin! For example, Milwaukee Riverkeeper held its [spring cleanup event](#) at more than 90 locations across the Milwaukee River Basin. Madison Parks also held an [Earth Day Challenge](#) to clean up local parks. In the La Crosse area, there was a [community river cleanup](#) on May 11, 2024.

Ozaukee County: Water Quality Testing In Local Streams

With help from the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association and its Great Lakes Committee, Ozaukee County was able to obtain a grant to test streams within the Sauk, Sucker and Fredonia-Newburg 9-key element plan watersheds. These tests will occur over a four-month period (May-August), looking at phosphorus and *E. coli* levels both immediately after a precipitation event and during base-flow periods.

These tests will allow Ozaukee County to gain valuable information, such as determining baseline conditions of streams and what watersheds or stream segments require the most attention.

This information should also help locate additional sources of pollution throughout the watersheds, as the county will be testing in areas with high densities of non-permitted septic systems.

Looking beyond 2024, the county's hope is to find partners or additional funding sources to continue this crucial testing. Continued testing will further add to their stream data archive and, in turn, work smarter in their endless goal of enhancing the water resources of Ozaukee County.

To learn more about this project, contact Chase Brouillette, soil and water conservationist, at cbrouillette@ozaukeecounty.gov.

Plowing Snow: Damage To Landscaping

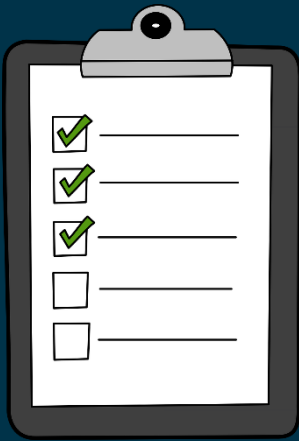
As the snow melts, damages to landscaping may begin to show along public walkways, parks and other areas kept clear of snow. These unstable areas can create a muddy mess but could also run off into nearby waterways or stormwater drains.

Stabilizing these areas to ensure vegetation will grow back is a beneficial spring-cleaning BMP that could be implemented.

Other BMPs, such as clearly identifying the boundaries of lawn areas when the ground is covered in snow, can help avoid this issue in the first place. For example, reflective snowplow markers or large bright stakes could help outline the edges, landscape and plant materials. However, be sure to install these makers before the ground is frozen and the first anticipated snowfall.



Photo Credit: [Winter Lawn Tips: Snow Plow Damage](#) (nutrilawn.com)



Want To Be Featured In The MS4 Summer Edition?

We want to hear about your municipality's success stories and practical procedures.

Please reach out to Wisconsin DNR stormwater specialists with stories to include in upcoming editions:

Lexi Passante
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or

Samantha Katt
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Upcoming Dates, Reminders And Events

MS4 General MS4 Permit Expiration

The MS4 General Permit expired on April 30, 2024. Though the MS4 General Permit will not be reissued by May 1, the permit will be administratively extended since all MS4 General Permittees reapplied for permit coverage with their fourth year MS4 Annual Report submittal. MS4 General Permittees should continue to implement current permit conditions until the next permit is issued. If you have questions, please contact your regional stormwater specialist.

DNR Awards \$6 Million In Grants To Help Restore And Protect Wisconsin's Surface Water

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recently announced approximately \$6 million in grant funding to lake organizations, nonprofit organizations and municipal and county governments throughout Wisconsin. Funding, which includes Healthy Lakes and Rivers grants as well as support for the Clean Boats, Clean Waters and Lake Monitoring and Protection Network programs, will be used to help restore and protect the state's surface water resources in 2024 and beyond. The [FY24 Surface Water Grants Proposed Funding List](#) can be found on [the DNR's Surface Water webpage](#).

Wisconsin DNR 2022 Water Conditions List

The [2022 Water Condition Lists](#) may be used to check the receiving water status for both the impaired waters list and restoration waters list section of a total maximum daily load.

Save The Date: Wisconsin Stormwater Week 2024

The second annual Wisconsin Stormwater Week will be held on Sept. 21-29, 2024! Check back soon to learn more and discover [Wisconsin Stormwater Week events](#) in your area for 2024.