

PA DEP Stormwater Manual Oversight Committee
December 8, 2003
Rachel Carson State Office Building
Meeting Minutes

1. PA DEP Inputs

Denny Stum commented that numerous Oversight Committee (OC) members had difficulty in receiving email attachments prior to this meeting as sent out directly from Cahill Associates. PA DEP is in the process of organizing an electronic bulletin board for the manual project, which will eliminate this problem. DEP will email the members when the bulletin board is ready to receive comments.

Durla Lathia presented a power point titled "Pennsylvania's Comprehensive Stormwater Approach." This presentation generated a discussion on the importance of ensuring long term maintenance of BMPs, uniform statewide review and enforcement among different regions and conservation districts, the role of county planning commissions in this process and how they would be brought into this process, keeping conservation district staff up to date with the latest technical information and about the importance of detail and specificity in the new manual. DEP responded that one of the purposes of the manual is to provide more clarity and direction for implementing the stormwater requirements and policies of the Commonwealth. The contract with Cahill Associates includes training for DEP and Conservation Districts as well as the public. DEP will advise the Conservation Districts to ensure county planning offices are aware of training opportunities related to the stormwater programs.

2. Review and finalization of first OC meeting minutes and comments received
Compilation of written comments received

Minutes from the October 10, 2003 meeting with attached written comments received were reviewed and approved without additional substantive discussion. Written comments are much appreciated, have been constructive and quite helpful. Cahill's Michele Adams distributed and reviewed a brief outline of written comments received after the October meeting.

3. Review and Finalization of Draft Manual Outline
Distribution and discussion of Revised Detailed Outline
Section 5 and List of Structural BMPs

Cahill's Wes Horner reviewed the revised Manual outline, highlighting major changes that have occurred as a result of the last OC meeting and comments received since that meeting.

The list of Structural BMPs (Section 5.0) was presented and reviewed quickly. This is an important list. Wes made the point that in many instances it gets to be difficult to figure out where one BMP ends and another begins, given the similarity in some of the BMPs.

4. Draft Outline of Approach for all BMPs - All Stormwater Management Approaches/ Practices to be addressed as follows:

Proposed PA Manual Format

BMP Name
Stormwater Functions
Description/Definition of Approach or Practice
Variations
Applications
Design Considerations
Detailed Stormwater Functions
Construction Sequence
Maintenance Issues
Cost Issues
Specifications

Cahill's Michele Adams reviewed the draft outline as well as excerpts from other state manuals that Cahill had assembled with the committee. The Georgia Manual format in particular got good reviews from the Committee. Michele offered some overall comments relating to conciseness and importance of graphics and CAD details in these presentations. It was noted that it is important to begin with Stormwater Functions to clarify what the "work" of the BMP would include. Under Design Considerations, Michele stressed that there would be multiple "protocols" included at the end of Section 5 that would be common to many different BMPs, such as Soil Investigation and Testing and Guidelines for Infiltration Systems and others. All of these sections would be clearly referenced but would not be repeated each time, in order to reduce length and make the Manual more manageable.

Comments from the OC were generally favorable with many helpful suggestions made as follows:

- The manual should give a quick explanation as to why key design elements are being included.
- The manual should provide as much basis for performance of BMP as possible.
- There were several comments concerning the cost of BMPs. It was acknowledged that cost information is important but it was also pointed out that costs are variable with respect to many factors.
- The manual should emphasize avoidance of impacts first and mitigation second.
- The manual should include a process checklist.
- The manual should be scientifically based and unbiased to be embraced by all. All points of view, techniques and approaches should be presented.
- A preference was presented for recommended or suggested approaches rather than rigid requirements.
- Maintenance issues should be discussed in detail, as this is a critical issue.
- Inspection and construction issues are important.
- Since PENNDOT specifications are widely used, they should be included/referenced.
- A suggestion was made to include a hierarchy of practices like a decision tree.
- A suggestion was made that soil testing is critical. Types and frequency of testing to be accepted should be clearly pointed out.

5. Detailed Review of Manual Sections and Substantive Issues: Section 4

Cahill's Wes Horner gave a power point presentation on Section 4.0 "preventative" non-structural approaches followed by a brief discussion among the committee members regarding the application and validity of non-structural approaches to stormwater management. Wes's presentation focused on the following:

- Site Analysis and Design Procedure

- Nonstructural (Macro Level) Approaches

- Overall Site Analysis

 - Natural system environmental constraints

 - Watershed context

 - Site content

 - Existing regulatory constraints

 - Municipal

 - County, State, Other

- Design Approaches

 - Preventative (Nonstructural)

 - Macro Building Program Issues

 - Concentrate development using neo-traditional planning principles, zoning and comprehensive plans

 - Apply resource protection restrictions, growth management concepts such as TDR, urban growth boundaries, private programs of conservation easements, PDR, etc. to accomplish overall goals

 - Low Impact Development/Conservation Design

 - Minimize disturbance/maintenance

 - Minimize impervious area

 - Protect most important site features

 - Protect high value site features

 - Disconnect/decentralize/distribute

 - Maximize time of concentration

The meeting was adjourned at 2PM. The next meeting is scheduled for January 27, 2004, RCSOB Room 105 at 10:00.