

## **Key recommendations for Ecology's consideration in issuing the next round of municipal stormwater permits**

December 9, 2015

The Stormwater Work Group's Federal agency staff caucus has discussed the Regional Stormwater Monitoring Program (RSMP) being implemented through requirements in Special Condition S8 Monitoring and Assessment of the municipal stormwater permits. The purpose of the RSMP is to provide adaptive management feedback that will improve other permit conditions and permittees' implementation of those requirements. The RSMP will also help us learn whether the permits are working to protect receiving waters from stormwater impacts over time.

Overall, we think the RSMP is going smoothly. The RSMP Coordinator is doing a fantastic job of managing projects and providing budget and progress reports to the stakeholder oversight group. We do not yet have enough information back from the RSMP to make specific recommendations on changing the scientific framework or priorities. Ecology should continue to implement the program as outlined in the 2010 Stormwater Work Group recommendations while continuing to implement "lessons learned" in launching and conducting the RSMP.

Stormwater is an important issue. Federal agencies are interested in using RSMP data. Federal agencies have also contributed to the RSMP and overall stormwater monitoring efforts in Puget Sound by:

- EPA funded two key projects for launching the RSMP: the first phase USGS stream gaging network analysis; and the Source Identification Information Repository scoping memo, literature review, and recommendations.
- USGS's Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Partnership created the Puget Sound shoreline master sample for the RSMP and guided Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife's selection of the nearshore monitoring sites inside urban growth areas for mussels. This site list will also be used for the sediment monitoring in summer 2016.
- USGS contributed federal matching funds to expand the RSMP stream monitoring effort by adding pressure transducers to continuously measure water levels, and to enhance the analysis of the overall RSMP data set.
- USGS's National Water Quality Assessment Program monitored additional small streams locations using a different but complementary approach to add to the body of knowledge of stormwater impacts.
- USFWS and NOAA are engaged in long-term studies of stormwater effects on salmon and their habitat. Recently our efforts have shifted from determining the precise cause of effects, such as pre-spawn mortality, to effectiveness of treatment methods in preventing those adverse effects.
- NOAA Fisheries has been working with FHWA, WSDOT and other WA transportation agencies to incorporate the best available science (BAS) on stormwater effects into our ESA section 7 consultations since 2007.

In addition to the Stormwater Work Group, Federal scientists and managers serve on the Pooled Resources Oversight Committee, SWG Effectiveness Study Selection Subgroup, SWG Roads and Highways Subgroup, SWG Communication Subgroup, SWG Agricultural Runoff Subgroup, and the related PSEMP Workgroups for Freshwater, Toxics, Marine Nearshore, Marine Water Quality, and Salmonids. Federal scientists and managers also participate in the Lower Columbia Habitat Status and Trends Monitoring program.