

Moving stormwater public education to prime time

New organization seeks to share messages nationally



All municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permits issued by the IEPA, Gilberts included, require public education as a strategy to improve stormwater and receiving water quality by changing public behavior.

Public education is the primary workhorse of nonstructural **Best Management Practices (BMPs)**. The public can reduce or eliminate behaviors that impair stormwater quality — such as littering, using pesticides and fertilizers, dumping, and leaving pet waste. Public education is a powerful BMP; this is why it is a required element of all MS4 programs. But to date, the stormwater sector has neglected some efficiencies that can gain both performance and cost. Taking advantage of this missed opportunity will require a shift in how permittees implement their public education program elements.

Commercial advertising is the most basic example of a public education campaign designed to change public behavior. National advertising campaigns are viewed as the most effective.

The National Municipal Stormwater Alliance (NMSA) seeks to fill this void. NMSA is a new national stormwater organization focused on clean water for the nation through compliance with the MS4 stormwater program. NMSA was formed in close partnership with the Water Environment Federation and has been founded through the participation of state-level organizations of MS4 permittees. The organization works exclusively on issues and concerns directly related to the MS4 permitting program. The **NMSA** seeks to represent MS4s at a national level and to help lead changes in regulation both proactively and reactively.

For more information about the **NMSA** go to: <http://www.nationalstormwateralliance.org/>