

Charles County MS4 Permit History

Charles County qualified as a “medium size municipality” defined by the Clean Water Act, when the population threshold of 100,000 persons was crossed in the 1990's. At that time the County was required to apply for permit coverage for the northern part of the County, known as the Development District, where urbanization is concentrated. The process for application required storm sewer system mapping of the Development District, and chemical testing of major drainage outfalls for contaminants during dry weather, as well as other related programs, such as the Stormwater Management Programs. The County's first five year permit was issued in 1997 by the [Maryland Department of the Environment](http://www.mde.state.md.us/) (MDE)(<http://www.mde.state.md.us/>) with the regulatory program goal of eliminating non-stormwater discharges and reducing pollutants from the storm sewer system to the “maximum extent practicable”. The first permit is described below.

NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit Years 1997-2002

Under this permit, the County began compliance in six categories: legal authority, source identification, discharge characterization, management programs, program funding, and assessment of controls. Each year Charles County is required to submit a report to MDE describing compliance. Copies of these reports are kept in the Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management.

Highlights of the first permit include, initiation of an urban storm water monitoring site, including chemical, biological and physical parameters, continued dry weather outfall monitoring, and a county-wide, three year water quality study titled, [Mattawoman Creek Watershed: Nutrient and Sediment Dynamics](http://www.charlescounty.org/pgm/planning/plans/environmental/mattawoman/nutrient.htm), (<http://www.charlescounty.org/pgm/planning/plans/environmental/mattawoman/nutrient.htm>) which was conducted by the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center. Other advances include a retrofit study of the storm water management drainage system, and an update of the storm sewer system mapping to include current development.

NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit Years 2002-2007

The County's second five-year permit was issued July 2002. The second permit continues the six categories of the first permit with the addition of a seventh category: Watershed Restoration. This category requires 10% restoration of the untreated impervious surface in the County's Development District. Restoration means improving the quality and/or controlling the volume of stormwater runoff from developed properties. Examples of restoration activities include education programs, stormwater pond and stormwater structure retrofits, adding stormwater controls where none existed, and stream restoration.