***SWCD/OhioEPA Working Partnership***

***Guidance Document for***

***SWCD Urban Stormwater and Ohio EPA Staff***

Soil and Water Conservation Districts across Ohio are assisting local landowners, businesses and regulated MS4 communities with NPDES permit compliance work more and more each year. SWCD MS4 working agreements contain a varied extent of services across the state, but the desire to assist communities in complying with stormwater permit and ultimately protect the soil and the water is universal. Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Ohio EPA have a long history of partnership in meeting these goals. This document, produced by both SWCDs and Ohio EPA, aims first to enhance our working relationship and improve our services to our local constituents. Through this strengthened collaboration, we will increase our success in protecting and improving the water quality and soil health of our region.

**Strengths of SWCDs:**

* Strong local relationships and expertise
* Fast local response
* Statewide organizational resources
* Incentives and support for permit compliance
* Foster local compliance and environmental stewardship

**Strengths of OhioEPA:**

* Extensive knowledge base
* Training expertise and increased opportunities for training (TDP)
* Technical assistance
* Regulatory authority
* Guidance documents

**Supporting an effective SWCD/Ohio EPA working partnership at the state level:**

A team of SWCD and Ohio EPA leaders has worked to lay the foundations for effective working partnership between agencies. To sustain this groundwork, this leadership team might:

* Convene on a yearly basis.
  + Discuss guidance document
  + Relay successes and hurdles from the prior year that need attention
  + Expand guidance document as necessary

**Supporting an effective SWCD/Ohio EPA working partnership at the local level:**

SWCD and Ohio EPA recognize that effective communication can bring a great deal of understanding, ease workflow, and set partners up for success. SWCD and Ohio EPA staff are encouraged to hold a yearly meeting in each Ohio EPA district. Suggested meeting topics are listed below.

* Exchange contact lists of interested SWCD and regional OhioEPA staff.
  + Include chain of command
  + Preferred method(s) of communication
  + Discuss appropriate response timelines and contacts
* Work Specifics
  + Protocol for information requests/complaints received by Ohio EPA
    - SWCD/Ohio EPA roles and expectations
  + Review MS4 MCM 1-6
    - SWCD/OhioEPA roles and expectations
    - Reduce of duplication of effort
    - Process improvements
    - Review permit updates/focus points
    - Review Annual Report/SWMP
    - Compliance support
  + Pollution Reporting
    - Preferred response, routing and communication
  + Local Regulations
    - Review of documents to ensure all are up to date and complete
    - Create timeline/plan to revise if necessary
  + Local MOUs/Contracts/Partnerships
    - Review documents to understand how local partners and communities are working together
* Training
  + New staff training
  + Urban TDPs through ODA
  + Project/specific situation-based training
  + Regional roundtable support