

Public Education and Outreach Plan

(Effective April 18, 2014)

Virginia Highlands Community College (VHCC) operates a Stormwater Management Program in compliance with the Virginia General Permit for Discharges of Stormwater from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4 General Permit). In accordance with Section II.B.1 of the permit, VHCC implements a Public Education and Outreach Program on stormwater impacts (the Program).



Consistent with the MS4 General Permit, the Program considers the following goals:

- Increase the knowledge of VHCC's students, faculty, and staff about the steps that can be taken to reduce stormwater pollution, placing priority on reducing impacts to impaired waters and other local water pollution concerns;
- Increase VHCC's students, faculty, and staff knowledge of hazards associated with illegal discharges and improper disposal of waste, including pertinent legal implications; and
- Implement a diverse program with strategies that are targeted towards audiences most likely to have significant stormwater impacts.

These goals are intended to be met as part of an iterative program that will assess effectiveness of the Program by assessing the level of knowledge over time of the college's public, defined as their students, faculty, and staff. The Program is designed consistent with the MS4 General Permit to:

- ❖ Identify 3 high-priority water quality issues and provide rationale for the selection of each issue;
- ❖ Identify and estimate the population size of the target audience who is most likely to have significant impacts on each water quality issue;
- ❖ Identify the relevant message and associated educational and outreach materials for distribution to the target audiences.

Public participation during the development of this Program included the distribution of a survey through email that incorporated questions regarding stormwater runoff and surface water quality. Results are provided in Appendix A. The survey was intended to gauge VHCC students, faculty, and staff on their knowledge of stormwater impacts. Response to the survey included 53 students, 21 faculty, and 14 staff members. Insightful results towards the development of the Program include:

- 93% of respondents do not know that stormwater discharges into local waterways
- 63% of respondents feel they had very little or no knowledge of steps to take to reduce stormwater pollution
- 94% of respondents are interested, or may be interested, in improving surface water quality

- 77% of respondents do not know who to contact when they observe an issue negatively impacting water quality
- 70% of respondent indicate email as the most effective method to reach with educational materials.

Selection of high-priority water quality issues were selected based on results disseminated from the survey and general knowledge of campus operations. VHCC's high-priority water quality issues for the Public Education and Outreach Program are provided below. Based on measures of effectiveness for each, any may be replaced or refined with approval of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Water Quality Issue No. 1: Public education on stormwater impacts

Rationale: This issue was selected based on the results of the public survey that indicate a strong need for improved public education. This rationale is supported with the survey results in Attachment A.

Target Audience: Survey results indicate that the entirety of VHCC's public audience needs increased education since all could have an impact in the improvement of stormwater runoff with knowledge of steps to reduce stormwater pollution. This audience fluctuates by semester and generally includes:

- ±3,600 students, faculty and staff

Relevant Message: To address goals of the Program and concerns stemming from the survey results, the relevant message will include:

- General information about stormwater runoff (where it drains, pollutants, etc.)
- Steps that can be taken to reduce stormwater pollution
- Information regarding VHCC's Stormwater Program, including opportunities to participate in efforts to improve water quality
- Contact information when observing an issue or activity that negatively impacts surface water quality

Outreach Materials to Convey the Relevant Message: An email sent to the entire target audience that includes a brochure with the relevant messages and a link to the VHCC stormwater webpage. Email was selected as the appropriate mechanism based on survey respondents identifying it as the most effective way to reach them with educational material (70%).

Schedule: Outreach material will be distributed a minimum of once a year to at least 20% of each target audience.

Method to Determine Effectiveness: As deemed appropriate for a community college that typically retains students for two years, the public survey described above will be redistributed biennially. Results will be disseminated to determine if the public's knowledge of stormwater runoff and its impacts have increased.

Water Quality Issue No. 2: Education on special water quality concerns

Rationale: Survey results indicated that VHCC's public ranks bacteria as their top water quality concern, closely followed by motor oil from cars and pesticides/insecticides.

Target Audience: The survey results regarding the top water quality concerns reflect the entirety of the VHCC public. This audience fluctuates by semester and generally includes:

- ±3,600 students, faculty and staff

Relevant Message: To address goals of the Program and concerns stemming from the survey results, the relevant message will include:

- Practices and steps to take to reduce bacteria, motor oil from cars, and pesticides/insecticides from being exposed to precipitation. This will include proper collection and disposal of pet wastes, proper car maintenance, and proper application of pesticides/insecticides.

Outreach Materials to Convey the Relevant Message: An email sent to the entire target audience that includes a brochure with the relevant messages and a link to the VHCC stormwater webpage. Email was selected as the appropriate mechanism based on survey respondents identifying it as the most effective way to reach them with educational material (70%).

Schedule: Outreach material will be distributed a minimum of once a year to at least 20% of each target audience.

Method to Determine Effectiveness: A knowledge quiz will be given at the conclusion of each training session. Results from questions included in the quiz specific to special water quality concerns will be disseminated to determine if the targeted staff's knowledge of the VHCC Nutrient Management Plan and methods for reducing the discharge of sediment is satisfactory or increases over time.

Water Quality Issue No. 3: Good Housekeeping and Pollution Prevention Practices on VHCC campuses

Rationale: Based on field inspections, the potential for preventable pollutants to be exposed to precipitation on the VHCC campuses is most likely to occur from day-to-day operational activities.

Target Audience: Staff performing day-to-day activities that include materials that could be exposed to precipitation if improperly managed, handled, or stored. This audience includes:

- ±10 staff

Relevant Message: Information incorporated into VHCC's Good Housekeeping/Pollution Prevention Program Manual.

Outreach Materials to Convey the Relevant Message: The message will be conveyed using the VHCC Good Housekeeping/Pollution Prevention and Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Program Manuals during annual training of the target audience.

Schedule: Training will be provided to the target audience annually.

Method to Determine Effectiveness: VHCC will measure effectiveness based on the number of recurring issues related to campus staff activities identified during the annual comprehensive campus evaluation (see BMP 3.4 of the VHCC MS4 Program Plan). Effectiveness will also be based on the illicit discharges reported or observed that are related to day-to-day staff activities (see BMP 3.2 and 3.3 of the VHCC MS4 Program Plan.)