



March 29, 2010

Thelma Murphy
EPA New England Region 1
Post Office Square - Suite 100
Boston, MA 02109-3912

Dear Ms. Murphy:

I am writing to express the Blackstone River Watershed Association's (BRWA) strong support for EPA's Draft General Permit for Small MS4s in the North Coastal Watersheds of Massachusetts and urge EPA to issue it within the year.

For the past few years the BRWA has been conducting outreach to inform residents and business owners of the threat that contaminated stormwater presents to our rivers and streams. We believe that the EPA should provide grants and guidance that encourages towns to work with local watershed associations to minimize the amount of stormwater discharged into our water bodies.

Municipalities typically do not have the resources to develop and conduct the type of citizen education that is required. The BRWA welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with conservation commissions, departments of public works, and other town entities or to present at town meetings and other municipal gatherings to drive attention to this major threat to the health of our drinking water, rivers, streams and lakes.

Our educational activities included a door-to-door campaign that distributed more than 600 packets to homes along the Mill River in Mendon and Hopedale to educate residents on easy steps they could take at home to minimize their contribution to this significant source of pollution. The "Homeowner's Guide to Protecting Water Quality in the Blackstone River Watershed" packets were provided by the Blackstone River Coalition. Additionally, we have approximately 30 volunteers that test the water quality of 30 various sites on a monthly basis and we have organized Stream Team Surveys along the Blackstone and its tributaries. These initiatives have provided us with first hand knowledge of the problems that are being caused by runoff.

The BRWA's efforts to bring attention to sources of water pollution could be strengthened if towns were required to post all stormwater reports and other information submitted under this permit on the EPA Region 1 website.

Thank you very much for considering the BRWA's comments on EPA's Draft General Permit for Small MS4s in the North Coastal Watersheds of Massachusetts.

Sincerely,
Dona Neely, President
Blackstone River Watershed Association