PWEA Position Statement
21st Century Stormwater Management

Adopted by PWEA on December 10, 2015

PWEA Mission Statement
Enhance the knowledge and abilities of Pennsylvania's water quality professionals, promote sound sustainable water policies, and promote public awareness of the need to protect water resources.

Stormwater has become a major topic of discussion, research and debate in Pennsylvania. Water Environment Federation (WEF) adopted a stormwater position statement entitled "21st Century Stormwater Management" on May 7, 2011 in response to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) plans to create a new national stormwater rule following the National Research Council's (NRC) 2009 report on urban stormwater. PWEA agrees with WEF in their summary statement on this topic, "Stormwater runoff has been identified as a principal contributor to water quality problems in U.S. waters. In addition to conveying chemicals, sediment, and microbial contaminants, increased stormwater runoff changes the velocity and volume of receiving streams in a manner that affects both the physical habitat and function of these waterways."

WEF believes that EPA should update CWA-related regulations that oversee stormwater-generated flows by adopting a number of the recommendations provided by the 2009 NRC report, such as:

- Utilization of a volume-based approach for stormwater treatment while allowing flexibility in programs to address solutions that best fit the specific climate, dominant soils, vegetative cover and other pertinent aspects of stormwater management.
- Support for green infrastructure in stormwater management efforts in conjunction with traditional downstream solutions to encourage the use of this emerging paradigm that not only addresses water quality treatment but also provides many other social, economic and environmental benefits.
- Incorporate flexibility into regulatory framework by allowing off-sets or payment-in-lieu for situations where stormwater treatment cannot be obtained. Adaptive management approaches should be integrated into the permitting process in recognition of the complex nature of stormwater solutions and permitting cycles should respect the timescale required for watershed-wide stormwater solutions to become established and functional.
- Increase funding for stormwater management through increases in the State Revolving Fund (SRF) or other Federally-leveraged funding mechanisms as well as the development of local fee-based frameworks, such as stormwater utilities. Also, all dischargers, including the Federal government, should share in the payment of stormwater collection, management and treatment.
- Recognize the effects of climate change and support sustainable solutions, such a green infrastructure, which provides the resiliency required to adapt to changing climatic conditions.
- Support for stormwater monitoring efforts and associated costs for local communities and research programs to document the performance of stormwater control measures. The results from these programs will inform more effective future solutions for this growing field.
- Integration of watershed-based approach into permitting alternatives in order to address all contributors. A creative permitting structure, such as cross-jurisdictional umbrella permits using water-quality trading markets, can more effectively target treatment of pollutants causing downstream waterbody impairments.

Now in 2015, the growing issue of stormwater pollution coupled with regulatory pressure is driving the need for innovative approaches, training, technology solutions, and progressive financing. As such, WEF launched the Stormwater Institute on September 28, 2015, which is a new center of excellence and innovation that focuses on addressing critical stormwater management issues as a means to protect public health and the environment. The institute will work with the stormwater sector to identify cross-cutting issues; convene experts to assist with developing solutions; provide insights and leadership to policymakers; and help chart a new course toward a healthier and more sustainable stormwater sector. The first resource of the institute is the *Rainfall to results: The future of stormwater* report, which supports this effort by setting a vision for the future of sustainable stormwater management.

The vision is that “all stormwater will be considered a resource and managed through an optimized mix of affordable and sustainable green, gray, and natural infrastructure. Pollutant source control and management of runoff volume will be pursued aggressively as a complement to traditional stormwater controls. Stormwater infrastructure will be funded fully and managed by a true utility with a comprehensive asset management plan that benchmarks for future success. Management techniques will improve continually through new science, experiences, technical innovations, and responsive regulations. Stormwater management will be part of doing business and part of community resiliency and quality of life. The community will value and understand the many benefits of stormwater infrastructure.”

Collaborative action across all disciplines within the stormwater sector and broader community engagement will be required to achieve the envisioned future. Six critical objectives were identified to achieve this goal:

- **Work at the watershed scale** - all communities will have integrated, watershed-scale assessments of water resources needs and challenges;
- **Transform stormwater governance** - communities will catalyze further formation of stormwater utilities and regulations to stimulate stormwater control innovation and performance improvement by focusing on program outcomes;
- **Support innovation and best practices** - a broad suite of verified stormwater controls and best practices will support confident planning and maintenance;
- **Manage assets and resources** - stormwater systems will be maintained through robust asset management programs and supported by innovative information technology;
- **Close the funding gap** - communities will align stormwater management efforts with broader community goals to garner funding options and have access to innovative financing opportunities;
- **Engage the community** - communities will understand and value the contribution stormwater management makes to flood risk reduction, clean and safe water, climate resiliency, and other benefits.

PWEA supports the institute’s vision for the future and the identified critical objectives. PWEA will look for opportunities to play an active role in informing and educating its members and the public on this topic through PWEA-promoted conference sessions, specialty conferences and articles broadly disseminated to its members.