

# How Can RPCs Assist with MS4 Permit Compliance

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The new MS4 permit (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) was released on January 18, 2017 and while the 2003 MS4 permit expired in 2008, it remains in effect until the coverage is obtained under the reissued permit in July 2018. Communities will have 17 months before the permit becomes effective to establish budgets and prepare. During these 17 months, municipalities are creating roadmaps of steps needed to comply with the new permit. Five regional planning commissions (RPCs) are coordinating efforts to effectively and efficiently serve their communities that must respond to permit requirements. The following is a menu of possible services RPCs can offer member communities. RPCs recognize the need to work with communities in the most cost effective ways. This may include coordinated community efficiencies, finding grant sources, or other creative means.

Note: Costs will vary depending on many variables such as number of participating communities, eligibility of matching funds, expertise required, and the unique needs of each community. Therefore no estimates are included at this time.

## RPCs as Coordinated Services Provider

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### 1. MS4 Permit Research and Advising

RPC staff can assist municipalities by serving as a source of research and information for the best models, tools, and practices for MS4 compliance from around the region and state. A key way RPC's can serve in this role is by regularly participating in the regional Stormwater Coalition and periodic state wide events, and sharing the information gained from that participation. Participation in these groups and events helps to ensure the RPC can advise municipalities on the best, most cost-effective practices for their needs regarding stormwater pollution and MS4 permit requirements.

Examples of information that can be shared through participation in regional collaborations include model stormwater regulations, educational programs and materials, innovative stormwater reduction projects, funding mechanisms, and examples of inter-municipal cooperation.

- *Project Scale:* Shared regional services
- *Cost:* \$500 - \$1500 per municipality. The cost is variable based on the number of participating communities, but more participation will keep the cost lower.
- *Timeframe:* July 2017 -June 2018

### 2. Coordination and Sharing of Resources

RPC staff can collect and distribute work products produced by each of the municipalities. The costs of simply aggregating and posting information online and distributing through existing email lists can be provided at no cost to municipalities.

- *Project Scale:* Shared regional service
- *Timeframe:* Ongoing

### 3. Joint Purchasing

Some resources/supplies may benefit from bulk ordering such as water quality sampling kits and water quality testing.

### 4. Dedicated Shared Professional Stormwater Staff

For communities interested in hiring a shared staff person such as a “Stormwater Circuit Rider,” RPCs can serve as that single hiring point of contact or fiscal agent. The “stormwater circuit rider” would be housed at the sponsoring RPC but provide day to day services for participating municipalities, essentially serving as an on demand or part time contractual employee. This option would be best suited to municipalities that do not have or foresee hiring a staff person, but do need some dedicated staff support. All contractual or salary costs would be distributed among the participating communities and accounting handled by the RPC.

- *Project Scale:* Shared regional service
- *Timeframe:* Ongoing

## General Services

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### 5. Grant Writing

RPCs can be the lead applicant for grant funding to be applied for and awarded to a group of municipalities in the region to support MS4 permit compliance efforts. Depending on the scale of services offered, the administrative costs of serving as the fiscal agent may or may not be covered by municipal dues.

- *Project Scale:* Shared regional service or single municipality
- *Timeframe:* Ongoing

### 6. Municipal Permit Compliance Assessment

Relatively quickly and at no cost to municipalities, RPCs could provide a template road map of municipal permit requirements that includes a list of mandatory tasks and deadlines. The road map or assessment checklist would include space to document the responsible lead, timeframe for completion of tasks, and specific actions individual municipalities will take to complete the task. RPC staff would be available to consult with communities to assist with completion of the strategy for compliance or road map (identification of responsible parties and implementation actions).

- *Project Scale:* Shared regional service and single municipality
- *Timeframe:* July 2017 – December 2017 in preparation for 2018 Town Meeting and a July 1, 2018 Permit Effective Date

### 7. Host Workshops and Trainings

RPCs can host information transfer seminars dealing with such topics as Notice of Intent requirements, annual reporting, and technical compliance items. Workshops can be recorded and made available online for future and continuing reference.

- *Project Scale:* Shared regional service
- *Timeframe:* Ongoing

## 8. Water Quality Monitoring

RPC staff could be trained to conduct water quality sampling, develop procedures, etc. This service could be conducted under a similar model to traffic counting and one of the top places communities can save money by coordinating.

- *Project Scale:* Shared regional service and single municipality
- *Timeframe:* Ongoing

## Land Use and Environmental Planning Services

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### 9. Outreach and Education

All RPCs excel at outreach, education, facilitation, and public involvement strategies. Outreach and education products can be scalable and shared by all communities, eliminating redundancy and extending municipal outreach potential. To start, NHDES, EPA and other agencies as well as communities have existing education materials that can serve as the base to create a standardized set of products tailored to each of the specified audiences and/or community. These might include brochures, presentations and other products to be identified. Additionally, RPCs can prepare an “Outreach Event in a Box” ready to go kit complete with an event script, handouts, and materials for municipal groups to host their own events.

- *Project Scale:* Shared regional service
- *Timeframe:* Ongoing

### 10. Regulatory Audit

A regulatory audit is a relatively straight forward approach to assessing the status of a community’s existing regulatory standards. Depending on the level of detail, RPC staff can develop the template utilizing dues or other existing funding sources. Municipalities would then have the option to either conduct a self-audit or contract with their RPC to perform the regulatory audit. The effort would include a review of existing land development regulations and zoning ordinances, a preliminary draft audit report, meeting with the elected officials, staff and the planning board to discuss draft findings and recommendations and preparation of the final report.

- *Project Scale:* Shared regional service and single municipality
- *Timeframe:* July 2017 to June 2020

### 11. Update Land Development Regulations and Zoning Ordinances

As a minimum, RPCs can develop model ordinances or regulations for the various permit requirements. There are several existing models that are under review to ensure compliance with the new permit requirements. Each RPC would customize the model and update local land use regulations and/or zoning ordinances, refining each to the needs of the specific community. Actual costs will vary

dependent on whether a regulatory audit has been completed and/or the municipality is updating an existing ordinance/regulation or repealing and replacing existing language with model language.

- *Project Scale:* Shared regional service and single municipality
- *Timeframe:* July 2017 to June 2020

## 12. GIS and Mapping Services

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### Field Data Collection

RPCs can offer professional GPS services with their GPS receiver. The unit's on-board data logger can eliminate paper-based capture of attributes and increases workflow efficiency. For areas with cellular coverage RPC can simplify field data collection services by running ESRI's Collector App for iPad, which can achieve horizontal accuracy to within five feet under optimal conditions.

### GIS Data Development Services

RPC can use existing and historic paper maps to create GIS features (location and attributes) using georeferencing and digitizing workflows and to associate non-spatial files (e.g. tie cards) to GIS features. All work products would conform to modern geospatial standards.

### Data Repository and Data Hosting

The New Hampshire RPCs maintain repositories of historic and current GIS datasets for their respective region and communities. These data warehouses are an important and safeguarded resource for towns needing to meet the mapping and analysis requirements of the permit. As skilled GIS practitioners the RPCs follow best practices for GIS data management data which includes data sharing to support the GIS needs of the towns and their third-party service providers. Additionally, RPCs can support solutions for collaborative data access to curated GIS datalayers within these warehouses through hosted online applications or potentially through the NH SADES Statewide Asset Management System.

### Map Preparation

To ensure regulatory compliance NRPC can prepare accurate and intuitive maps either as stand-alone products or for insertion into reports and outreach materials. Maps can be generated in a variety of image formats or pdf, and they can be printed in full-color on 36" to 42" wide matte or glossy paper.

### Municipal Training

For communities with adequate tech resources and staffing RPCs can provide customized GIS training for all services above on an hourly basis.

#### *For all GIS Services:*

- *Project Scale:* Shared regional service and single municipality
- *Timeframe:* Continuing throughout the permit effective period