WVSA’s Regional Collaboration & Compliance Program

University of Connecticut

Jeff Colella, WVSA Stormwater Division Manager
32 Towns Centered on Wilkes-Barre
Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority

- Wastewater treatment (1962)
- Stormwater program (2017)
- 14 original municipalities
- 36 current wastewater municipalities
- 32 current stormwater municipalities
- More than 200,000 serviced residents
- Stormwater services began in 2019
Regional Wastewater Program

• Mid 1990s
  – Operations & Management (O&M) responsibility from the charter member municipalities for their sanitary sewer lines.
  – Began to assume ownership of the pump stations for the municipalities.

• Program for non-charter member municipalities for O&M

• Baseline that started our Stormwater Division

‘The WVSA has demonstrated that regionalization can work, given half a chance, and the rewards are lower costs and better service’ - The Citizens’ Voice
Regional Wastewater Program

- 95,000 EDUs
- More than 200,000 people served
- 25 MGD of sewage treated (ADF)
- 50 Diversion Chambers (combined sewer outfalls)
- 800 miles of sanitary line
- 14,800 sewer manholes
- 64 pump stations
MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems)

Chesapeake Bay Agreement:
- Executed in 1983
- Signed:
  - Governors - Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania
  - Mayor of D.C.
  - Administrator of E.P.A.
- 2000 set new goals
  - Delaware, New York and West Virginia joined
- 2023 set goal to reduce 10%
  - Municipalities required to meet goals
Municipal Stormwater Challenges

#1: Polluted streams
#2: Tightening regulations

All municipalities in WVSA's Service Area have MS4 Permits issued by DEP, requiring:
- Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce suspended solids entering waterways by 10% over the next five years.
- Compliance with Minimum Control Measures (MCMs)
- Stormwater Infrastructure Mapping

#3: Aging infrastructure
#4: Increased development = more stormwater, flooding
#5: Level funding

Historically, municipalities have funded stormwater costs through tax revenues that have remained stable despite growing costs
Regional Cost Savings

Regional stormwater service reduces overall cost by:

50-70%
Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreements

• Wastewater
  – 1965: 14 municipalities joined.
  – 1993 to Present: 22 additional municipalities joined.

• Stormwater
  – Met with 36 Municipalities to promote idea of a Joint Pollution Reduction Plan (PRP).
  – 2018: 32 Municipalities joined the program.
  – Regionalized PRP approved by Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) in December 2019.
Why Stormwater Management?

Municipalities asked WVSA to help with Stormwater Management due to:

- Economies of scale
- Most local municipalities are regulatory deficient
- History of community fines
- Regional entities attract more grant dollars
- Ability to fund local projects

50 to 70% cost savings for each municipality in WVSA’s program.
What are WVSA responsibilities?

- Municipalities maintain ownership of MS4 permits and local control of existing stormwater infrastructure. They adopt ordinances, assist with MCMs and submit annual reports.

- WVSA
  - Administers the MS4 permits.
  - Completes Minimum Control Measures (MCMs) requirements.
  - Executes Best Management Practices (BMPs), performs street sweeping, etc., to meet pollution reduction requirements.
  - Assists municipalities with infrastructure maintenance and improvements.
  - Maps municipal infrastructure.
  - Reimburses each municipality for a portion of stormwater infrastructure improvement costs.
Starting a Stormwater Authority - Fee Development

- Find and utilize experienced, competent and qualified consultants and advisors
  - Experienced consultants will lead you in the right direction
  - Reach out to other stormwater authorities for recommendations
  - Research
- Take a slow approach and research all options
  - WVSA had a multi-year approach to startup
- Ensure the rate structure chosen is fair, equitable, and legally defensible
  - Many types of rate structures
  - Must be legally defensible and equitable
**Stormwater Fee Rate Structure**

Fee to be based upon IA (impervious area) per property

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<th>Tier</th>
<th>Tier IA Range (sq. ft.)</th>
<th>Monthly Charge</th>
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<tr>
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<td>100-499</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,000+</td>
<td>$1.70 per 1000 sq. ft. IA</td>
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Getting Ahead...Community Outreach

Key steps prior to customer billing...

• Meetings at senior citizens’ centers
• Public presentations at the start of the public municipal meetings
• Separate open-to-the-public presentation
• In-person meetings with any rate payer charged >$3,000 a year
• Top 50 rate payers attended meeting with the Board of Directors and Executive Director
• Newspaper Ads
• Direct informational mailers to all ratepayers
• New and or updated website
Public Outreach & Education Strategies

- Stormwater Credit Program
- Campaign for Otter Mascot
- Public Surveys
- Municipal Steering Committee
- Rebranding/Website Upgrades
- Billing Upgrade/Newsletter Insert
Spotlight

Public Outreach & Education

• Stormwater Fee & Program Goals
Customer Partnerships: Who needs to be involved?

- Largest Commercial Property Owner
- Casino
- Retail
- Governments
  - Authorities
  - Member Towns
- Homeowners
Running an Authority

- State, Federal, and Other
- Additional power with grants by partnering
- Extra attention to the program by elected leaders
- Be very aggressive including speaking to PADEP about grant opportunities
- Gained momentum based on success
  - $10,000,000 to date in Grant Funds. This includes funding for Engineering, MCMs, and Construction
Lessons Learned...

• Partnerships & Easements - much easier for some projects (Stormwater Basin Retrofits), much more involved for others (Stream Restoration).
• Public Outreach & Education is key to building support.
• Grant opportunities are available - promote your program.
• Continually evaluate for cost-effectiveness, environmental impact, & new project opportunities.
WVSA Recognition for the Regional Stormwater Management Program

Committed to regional efficiencies and collaboration, WVSA earned recognition from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for its Regional Stormwater Management Plan and MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems) compliance program.

The plan organizes 32 municipalities to collectively improve their storm and sewer infrastructure to meet standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that will reduce pollution in the Chesapeake Bay.

It’s estimated that municipalities will save more than $200M over the next 20 years while ensuring the long-term sustainability of regional stormwater systems.

**Pictured from left:** Jeff Colella, Stormwater Division Manager, WVSA; Cindy Adams Dunn, Secretary, PA Dept. of Conservation & National Resources; Sandy Bartosiewicz, Director of Budget & Finance, WVSA, Davitt Woodwell, President of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council; Patrick McDonnell, Sec. Environmental Protection; James Tomaine, P.E., Director, WVSA, and Bernie Biga, Director of C.
On November 9th, 2022, Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority was presented with the Integrated Water Resources Management Award during a conference and award ceremony in Seattle, Washington. As bestowed by the American Water Resources Association, the award commemorates projects and practices aimed at improving local water sources.
You ‘otter know... we all live downstream.
THANK YOU