

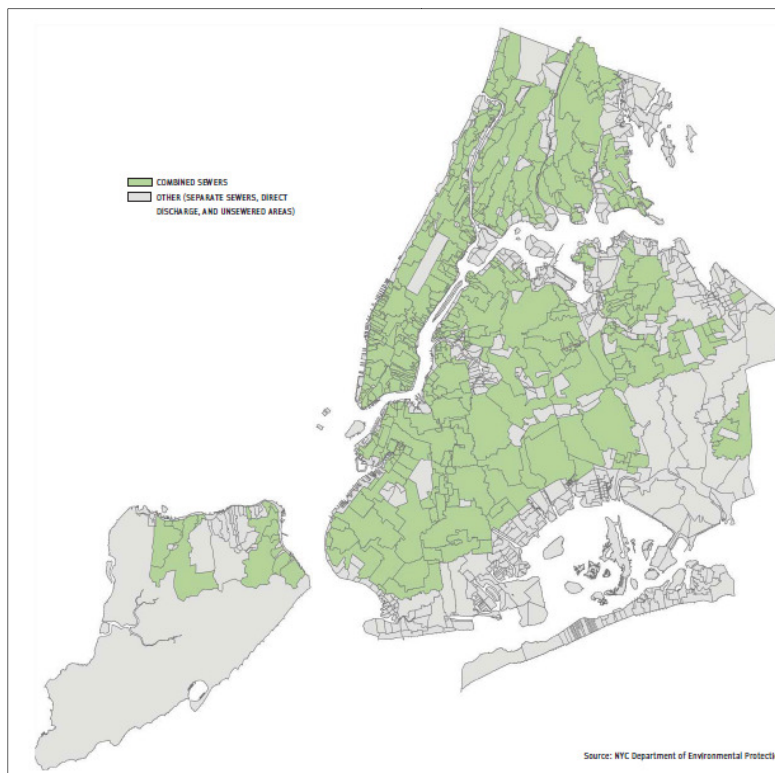


Stormwater Infrastructure Matters Coalition presents:

## NYC MS4 Stormwater Permit for Dummies

### What is MS4?

MS4 stands for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System. In New York City, it is the system of conveyances (including roads with drainage systems, municipal streets, catch basins, curbs, gutters, ditches, man-made channels, or storm drains), owned or operated by the city, and designed or used for collecting or conveying stormwater. The Separate Storm Sewer System is not a combined sewer and not connected to waste water treatment plants (meaning, the stormwater is not treated by a treatment plant before discharge into a waterway).



### Which areas in New York City are served by separate storm sewer systems?

About half of the City’s land area is separately sewered or unsewered or direct discharge areas (such as an industrial site). A little over a third of the sewered areas served by the City has separate storm sewers and the rest is served by the combined sewer system (“CSO”). In the map, the grey areas, with limited exceptions, will be considered MS4 areas.\* The green areas are the combined sewer areas.

### How is the separate storm sewer system a problem?

Polluted stormwater runoff is a leading cause of impairment to the nearly 40 percent of surveyed U.S. water bodies which do not meet water quality standards. Over land or via storm sewer systems, polluted runoff is discharged, often untreated, directly into local water bodies. When left uncontrolled, this water pollution can result in the destruction of fish, wildlife, and aquatic life habitats; a loss in aesthetic value; and threats to public health due to contaminated food, drinking water supplies, beaches, and recreational waterways.

\* Privately-owned, non-industrial properties that discharge runoff directly to a water body, without passing through a city-owned sewer or city-owned BlueBelt, are not covered by the proposed NYC MS4 permit.

### **What is an MS4 Permit?**

Under the federal Clean Water Act, sources of stormwater discharges that adversely affect the quality of our waterbodies must be addressed through the State Pollution Discharge Elimination Program (SPDES), which uses permits to require the City and other municipalities in New York to implement measures to control discharge of pollutants associated with stormwater.

### **What does the NYC MS4 permit require the City to do?**

According to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the agency that issues the permit, “[the] intent of this SPDES permit is to manage urban sources of stormwater runoff to protect overall water quality and improve water quality in impaired waters as part of a comprehensive integrated planning approach that considers non-MS4 sources and planned controls for those sources.”

The City is required to develop a Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) that includes:

- public education and participation
- illicit discharge detection and elimination
- construction and post-construction runoff for sites larger than 1 acre
- industrial user and industrial source control program
- municipal operations and facilities
- floatables control
- stormwater monitoring

### **What’s in it for me?**

Get involved! The DEC released the draft permit in early February and is soliciting public comments through April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014. It is important to submit comments to ensure this permit will lead to improved water quality in our waterbodies. We are sending a sample letter for your use. Even if you don’t live or work in the Separate Storm Sewer area, if you care about the water quality of the City’s waterbodies, please send a comment letter!

### **Where can I get more information?**

You can download the draft permit from the NYS DEC’s web site at:

[http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water\\_pdf/ms4nycdraft.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/ms4nycdraft.pdf)

You can also request a sample comment letter from the S.W.I.M. Coalition by contacting Korin at [swimmablenyc@gmail.com](mailto:swimmablenyc@gmail.com) or visiting the S.W.I.M. Coalition’s web site at [www.swimmablenyc.org](http://www.swimmablenyc.org).