
CHAPTER 2 INTRODUCTION

2.0 Purpose of the Plan

The Upper Clinton Subwatershed Management Plan was developed to meet the Federal Phase II stormwater permit requirements. Since 1972, the Clean Water Act has been operating to reduce and control point-source water pollution. The next phase of this law (or “Phase II”) is requiring communities that have “urbanized areas” within their boundaries to help control non-point source pollutants entering surface waters through stormwater. Urbanized areas are determined by criteria using data from the 2000 U.S. Census.

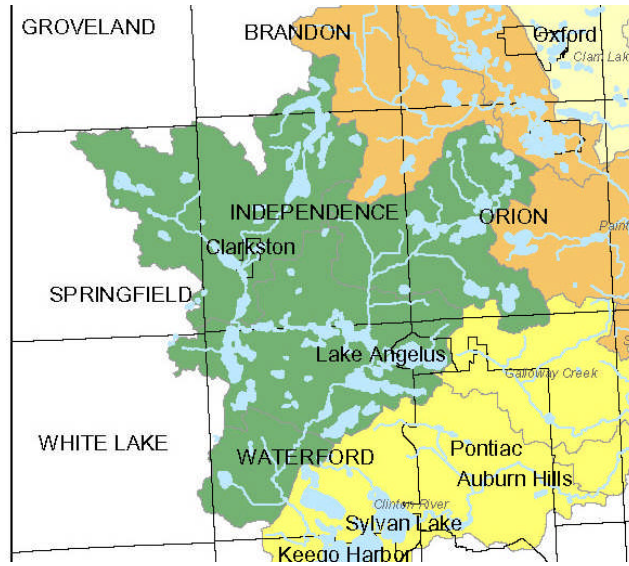
Stormwater management is being accomplished through a permit process called the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). In Michigan, two types of stormwater permits are available. The “Jurisdictional” permit follows the federal guidelines for NPDES permits and only covers the individual communities’ political boundaries. The “Watershed-Based” permit includes rules that the State of Michigan developed to encourage communities to work together on a watershed basis.

Both permit types authorize the discharge of stormwater from drainage systems which are owned or controlled by governmental entities. The main differences are that the watershed permit considers an entire watershed rather than just the land within the community’s boundaries. This makes more sense from an ecological standpoint because watersheds and subwatersheds usually cover large areas of land encompassing many communities. The watershed permit is also a locally-driven program, rather than a top-down mandate, creating more buy-in to the solutions outlined in the watershed plan.

2.1 The Upper Clinton Subwatershed

The Upper Clinton Subwatershed is part of the larger Clinton River watershed. It is called the “Upper Clinton” because it encompasses most of the headwaters, or sources, for the Clinton River system. The subwatershed is 86.24 square miles (55,194 acres), is located in the northwest portion of Oakland County, and covers ten communities:

- Springfield Township
- White Lake Township
- Brandon Township
- Independence Township
- City of the Village of Clarkston
- Waterford Township
- City of Lake Angelus
- Orion Township
- City of Auburn Hills
- City of Pontiac



2.2 Watershed Plan Participants

When the Phase II regulations were released by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the communities within the Upper Clinton Subwatershed met to discuss the permit options and decide upon which course to take. The watershed-based permit was decided on, and the communities created a “Core Group” of community representatives to begin developing the required documents under the permit rules.

The Core Group’s main functions were to meet monthly, guide the process to satisfy the permit deadlines, develop draft documents, and to make final decisions on how each community will commit itself to actions included in the various permit documents. The Core Group also decided that there should be several other levels of involvement in developing the Watershed Management Plan:

- A “Steering Committee,” was created which includes a wider range of regional and county agencies, state environmental agencies, nested jurisdictions, business organizations, and others who have information about the subwatershed and a unique perspective on water quality issues, and
- “Stakeholders,” which includes an even broader range of people such as public officials and staff, civic groups and others within the general public who will assist in the planning and implementation of the Watershed Plan.

Both Steering Committee members and stakeholders have provided significant input throughout the planning process. At different points in the development of the plan, the Steering Committee was convened and asked to provide information about the subwatershed and to review and give feedback on document drafts. The stakeholders were also asked to give feedback on the plan drafts, as well as help to develop goals for the plan.

2.3 Watershed Plan Organization

The Watershed Plan was developed by following the guidelines in the book titled *Developing a Watershed Management Plan for Water Quality. An Introductory Guide*. This book was prepared by the Michigan State University (MSU) Institute of Water Research, MSU Extension and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) Nonpoint Source Program.

The first step in this process was identifying the other participants of the watershed management planning team. The Core Group determined who the Steering Committee members should be, and then the Steering Committee and the Core Group came up with a list of stakeholders. Next, the Core Group developed the watershed analysis, which identified the critical areas within the watershed, and prioritized pollutants, and the sources and causes of those pollutants. Another issue that was evaluated was how well the surface waters within the subwatershed met the designated uses identified by the State. All of this information was reviewed and commented upon by the Steering Committee.

The next step was to develop goals and objectives for the plan, which was achieved over a series of meetings with the Core Group, Steering Committee and stakeholders. The existing plans, policies, and projects for each permittee were evaluated for how well they protect water resources, and then Best Management Practices (BMPs) were developed to address the pollutants, sources and causes, and the goals of the plan. An action plan that outlines the BMPs and their proposed scheduled implementation was then developed, along with approximate costs. The last step in the planning process was to develop an evaluation process that can be used to assess the progress made by the participating communities. The action plan is summarized in Chapter 7 through an “Action Matrix,” which shows how all of this information relates to each other.