

# EPA STORM WATER

## NATIONAL POLLUTION DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM

EPA violations can carry heavy penalties and fines.

**Be a Clean Water Advocate - report offenders** – 344-6582  
during working hours, Bernalillo County Sheriffs – 798-7000  
after hours and weekends

Storm water runoff is our most common cause of water pollution. Unlike pollution from industry or sewage treatment facilities, which is caused by a discrete number of sources, storm water pollution is caused by the daily activities of people everywhere. Rainwater and snowmelt run off streets, lawns, farms, construction and industrial sites and pick up fertilizers, dirt, pesticides, oil and grease, and many other pollutants on the way to our river.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates storm water discharges under the Clean Water Act's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program. The NPDES regulations cover discharges from municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s), certain industrial activities, and construction activities that disturb one acre or more of land. The information provided here describes the regulatory requirements for MS4s and construction activities involving one acre or more of disturbed land. **Contractors – NPDES information is contained in the Village application packets.**

### MS4s

The Storm Water Phase II Final Rule requires operators of regulated (MS4s) to obtain a NPDES permit and develop a storm water management program designed to prevent harmful pollutants from being washed by storm water runoff into rivers, lakes and streams.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Street Improvement Project installed a storm drainage system which discharges into the Alameda Main Canal, which then discharges into the Rio Grande. Because of this storm system, the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque is required to develop, implement and enforce an EPA, Storm Water Management Program designed to reduce the discharge of pollutants from a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) to the maximum extent practicable, to protect water quality, and to satisfy applicable surface water quality standards. The management program includes best management practices; public education and involvement; control techniques; system design and engineering methods.

The Village of Los Ranchos was permitted as an MS4 in May, 2011. The Village Storm Water Management Program includes the following six minimum control measures:

- Public Education and Outreach
- Public Participation/Involvement
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Construction Site Runoff Control
- Post-Construction Runoff Control
- Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping

The Village has only one outfall into the Alameda Drain (Main Canal) on Willow. The inlets are marked that these waters flow to the Rio Grande.

### **What are Storm Water pollutants?**

There are hazards associated with illegal discharges and improper disposal of waste. Endangered species specific to the Village of Los Ranchos are:

1. Fish — Rio Grande Silvery Minnow
2. Bird — Mountain Plover, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Bald Eagle, Mexican Spotted Owl
3. Mammal — Black-Footed Ferret

Additionally, polluted water affects other animals and humans alike. Pollution can be a result of water line flushing, landscape irrigation, diverted stream flows, rising ground waters, uncontaminated ground water infiltration (as defined at 40 CFR 35.2005 (20)), uncontaminated pumped ground water, discharges from potable water sources, foundation drains, air conditioning condensation, irrigation water, springs, water from crawl space pumps, footing drains, lawn watering, individual residential car washing, flows from riparian habitats and wetlands, dechlorinated swimming pool discharges, and street wash water.

### **What are storm water pollutants relevant to the Village???**

The 4<sup>th</sup> Street storm drain system is not the only way waters in the Rio Grande can be impacted. With Los Ranchos being so close to the river, there are potential pollution sources through the irrigation canals and ground water.

**Number One Polluter:** Animal waste: Fecal matter washed away into storm drains, irrigation canals, and sinking into the ground water causes an increase in fecal coliform bacteria. Pet owners and livestock owners need to control their animal wastes so that coliform bacteria does not enter the waterways. The

Village has installed signs, trash cans and doggie waste bags on many of the acequias and ditch trails. USE THEM!!!

Dumping trash, waste, tree branches, grass clippings, pool or pond water, oil, grease, household cleaners, transmission and radiator fluid, animal waste, deceased animals or any debris is **strictly prohibited**. Village Ordinance prohibits the burying of dead animals, animal waste or trash within the Village. Automobile wastes: Oil and grease pollute the waterways. Restaurant oil and grease traps and screens are required.

Erosion and Sediment: Sediment loads are of great concern for water quality.

Floatables: Poorly contained solid waste (like plastic bags, fast food containers and other debris) float in storm water and enter the drain system or canals, then flow to the River and do not disintegrate.

Potable water for each residence comes from the same aquifer and a threat to the quality of any part of the aquifer is a threat to all of it. The shallow water table in the Village area compounds this problem. The main threat to this aquifer is percolation of pollutants through the surrounding soil to the water table. The sources of these materials are many and varied, including leaking underground tanks and the leaching of materials from the surface, such as chemicals used for agricultural purposes and septic systems

Restaurant owners must install grease traps in their drains to prevent waste water contamination.

All new development and redevelopment projects that disturb greater than or equal to one acre, including projects less than one acre that are part of a larger common plan of development or sale must submit proof of their construction NOI and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) as well as a grading and drainage plan for on-site storm water retention after completion of construction.

Erosion and sediment as well as animal wastes are two of the Village's main sources of potential pollution.

What can you do?

Reduce fertilizer application to plants and agricultural crops. Ensure that borders are maintained so that irrigation and lawn water does not run into the street. Use herbicides with short residual life at lower effective concentration. Move sprinkler heads away from street. Install low water use landscaping utilizing Green Infrastructure, Low Impact Development practices. Educate yourself in plant science so that plants are cared for properly, without excess fertilizer or water. Reduce turf areas where appropriate. Use short cycles of watering instead of heavier water programs to eliminate runoff into streets. Use reduced pressure on irrigation system to reduce over-spray and misting. Make sure sprinkler systems,

drip systems and irrigation systems are in good repair, installed correctly and operate effectively. Improve grades on turf areas to eliminate runoff into streets and arroyos. Install silt boxes and cobblestone at runoff exits. So not allow any water to enter an acequias or ditch.

Contact Information:

Questions, comments or to report illegal discharge or dumping, contact Tim McDonough or the Village of Los Ranchos Code Enforcement Officer at 344-6582 or [tmcdonough@losranchosnm.gov](mailto:tmcdonough@losranchosnm.gov)

Information about industrial activities can be found at EPA's home web site for NPDES <http://cfpub.epa.gov/npeds/index.cfm>.

Other website links:

<http://www.epa.gov/npdes>

<http://bernco.gov> (Depts. Offices & Divisions/Water Resources Program/Storm Water)