



# Scio Info

Township of Scio • Established 1833 • Spring 2003 Edition

## Phase II: Coming Soon to a Community Near You?

*Local governments prep for storm water management programs, by Chris Riggs, Huron River Watershed Council*

If all goes as planned, thousands of local governments across the nation, including several in the Huron River Watershed, will at long last fall under the regulatory shadow of Phase II when the sun dips below the horizon on March 10. No, it's not part of a government plan to fight terrorism. Phase II is actually a much anticipated set of rules put forth by the U.S. EPA and administered in Michigan by the DEQ to comply with the Clean Water Act (CWA) and help clean up the nation's waterways. In short, the Phase II Storm Water Rule requires small municipalities with separate storm sewer systems to establish a program to reduce storm water runoff. Phase II would reduce the amount of stormwater that is

discharged into local rivers and streams untreated.

(At present, it appears this Clean Water Act program will be implemented. However, the Bush administration's proposed changes to the CWA include reviewing the program that regulates Phase II. It is not yet clear how the proposed changes may affect implementation of Phase II.)

By instituting controls on unregulated sources of storm water, Phase II aims to reduce adverse impacts of pollutants on water quality and aquatic habitat. According to the 1996 National Water Quality Inventory, 40% of surveyed U.S. waterbodies are impaired by pollution and do not meet water quality standards. One of the leading sources of this impairment, in terms of both quality and quantity, is urban/suburban storm water runoff that carries pollutants such as pesticides and fertilizers from lawns, oil and grease from roadways, sediment from construction sites, and litter and trash.

### IT'S JUST A PHASE ...

Merely mentioning Phase II implies that there must be a Phase I. In 1990, EPA promulgated rules establishing Phase I of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm water program. Phase I requires medium and large municipalities (generally serving populations of 100,000 or greater) with separate storm sewer systems to implement a storm water management program. Phase II greatly extends cov-



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erage of the NPDES storm water program to include small municipalities (defined as those located in “urbanized areas” as defined by the Bureau of the Census). In southeast Michigan, this includes over 170 cities, townships, and villages. Approximately 50 of the 63 communities in the Huron River Watershed are subject to the Phase II regulations, including Scio.

## TWO TYPES OF PERMITS

In Michigan, all communities with storm sewers have the choice of submitting either a “Jurisdictional” or a “Watershed-Based” Storm Water General Permit application to the DEQ. While both permit types are designed to address the same basic requirements, each uses a distinct set of tools and criteria.

A Jurisdictional Permit is based on the EPA regulations and therefore follows a fairly well defined set of criteria to meet the prescribed federal requirements. Essentially, a Jurisdictional Permit requires a community to commit to develop and implement a Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) that includes the following “six minimum measures”:

1. Public education and outreach
2. Public participation and involvement
3. Identification and elimination of illegal

dumping and “illicit discharge connections” (e.g., sanitary sewage, laundry wastewater and oily wastewater) to storm water sewers

4. Control of soil erosion and sedimentation on construction sites greater than 1 acre
5. Control of post-construction storm water runoff from new development and redevelopment areas
6. Pollution prevention within the municipality (e.g., inspecting and maintaining storm water systems, regular street sweeping, and reduced use of pesticides or road de-icers)

Under a Jurisdictional permit, a community is only required to apply its Storm Water Management Plan to urbanized areas within its political boundary. However, it may also choose to expand the Plan to cover its entire political jurisdiction. While each community develops and advances its own SWMP, cooperation with neighboring communities will be necessary to meet the six minimum measures. For example, all of the Phase II communities in Washtenaw County have chosen the jurisdictional approach, but many are working together to construct efficient and complementary SWMPs with the assistance of outside resources such as the County Drain Commissioner, other County agencies, and HRWC.

In contrast, the Watershed-Based Permit is designed to facilitate watershed-wide storm water quality improvements and requires a higher degree of cooperative interaction with other communities outside the permittee’s jurisdiction. Although the Watershed-Based Permit addresses the same basic requirements as the Jurisdictional Permit, it provides greater flexibility in how the six minimum measures are selected and implemented. While each community develops its own Public Education and Illicit Discharge Elimination Plans, other requirements are addressed in a Watershed Management Plan (WMP) developed in conjunction with partnering neighborhood communities. A WMP considers natural as well as political boundaries, and it allows communities to develop a program that is tailored

## SCIO INFO

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*E. Spaulding Clark, Editor*

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to the specific issues and needs of its watershed. Under a Watershed-Based Permit, the community is responsible for implementing its program over its entire political boundary, rather than just those portions that are in urbanized areas.

Using a Watershed-Based Permit is more feasible in portions of the Huron River Watershed where more communities are subject to Phase II and have higher concentrations of urbanized areas. Under these circumstances, partnering with neighboring communities is more practical and may provide advantages over a Jurisdictional Permit. In both Livingston and Oakland Counties, many communities have opted for the Watershed-Based Permit and will be working together to adapt existing Watershed Management Plans (that were completed last year with the help of HRWC) to meet the requirements of the Phase II permits. Outside resources such as County Drain Commissioners, SEMCOG, and HRWC are assisting these communities in a watershed-based approach to Phase II.

### **AN ONGOING PROCESS**

The title of "Phase II" belies its ongoing nature, as it is certainly more than just a phase. It is also very much a work in progress, as indicated by delays to implementation and potential regulatory changes it continues to face. At the time this article was written, the DEQ had indicated that the Jurisdictional Permit application form would not be issued in time for communities to meet the March 10 application deadline. Therefore, communities considering the Jurisdictional Permit option will effectively be given an extension. In spite of this setback, if you listen closely, you may hear a collective sigh of relief from coast to coast (across both Michigan and the nation) as communities submit their Phase II applications and pause to catch their breath. But the respite may be short. Communities currently have a maximum of five years from the time their permit is approved to fully implement their programs, at which time they will begin revising their plans and re-apply for the next permit cycle. Although we are merely taking the first

strides down a long path, it is one that will ultimately reward us for our efforts.

## **Stormwater In Our Gardens**

*Homeowners can help solve the runoff problem, by Susan Wooley, Huron River Watershed Council*

As development covers more and more land with impervious surfaces - roads, rooftops, parking lots - our ditches and sewers are increasingly unable to handle the volume of water that runs off after a storm. The results are flooded basements and streets and seriously damaged streams and rivers. Government action is slowly coming into play (see the preceding article, "Phase II: Coming Soon to a Community Near You?"). In the meantime, property owners can help reduce this problem.

### **THE OLD, BAD WAY**

Until recently, the accepted approach to storm water management has been to drain it as quickly as possible into ditches or storm sewers and send it off to the nearest river. As development increases and more land is covered with impervious surfaces, more rainfall and snowmelt runs off the land and into waterways, and it flows faster and with more force. High, fast peak flows rip out stream banks, destroy habitat and add sediment that smothers stream bottoms. Run-off delivers a variety of pollutants directly to creeks and rivers, including algae-feeding nutrients. It also tends to be warmer, further degrading water quality in the creeks. Scientific studies show that when 8% or more land is covered by impervious surfaces, stream degradation begins to become apparent. Some of the urban streams in the Huron Watershed flow through neighborhoods with over 20% impervious surface.

### **THE NATURAL WAY**

In undisturbed natural areas, wetlands and vegetation act as buffers to slow the movement of rainwater and snowmelt, allowing some of it to

percolate into the ground where it recharges aquifers. The remaining unabsorbed water has a chance to move gradually downhill into the creeks and rivers in our watershed. This slow movement allows the water to be filtered by vegetation and natural processes that cleanse silt and contaminants from the water. Peak flows in streams are reduced, preserving banks and creek bottoms.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

So what can a homeowner do to help? We can copy nature and manage our yards and gardens in a way that keeps as much rainfall as possible right on site. First evaluate your property to determine where the water travels. A good time to do this is in the early spring when the ground is still saturated or slightly frozen and excess snowmelt or rainwater runs along the surface. Walk your property, looking at land elevations from several angles and identifying contours and low spots. Sketch a map. When you have a good idea of the path the water takes, then consider how you might modify its route and keep it on site. (Of course you know that you need to keep it away from your house and your neighbor's house.) There are as many ways to do this, as there are creative people to dream them up. Here are some ideas:

- Do you have a lot of lawn? Lawns on compacted soil are almost as impervious as driveways. You could convert some of the lawn into gardens in locations that will collect runoff and allow it to soak into the ground. Some people call these rain gardens. For more ideas on this topic, see *Bringing Garden Amenities into Your Neighborhood: Infrastructure for Ecological Quality*, by Joan Nassauer, B. Halverson, and S. Roos. A copy is available for review in the HRWC library.
- Does your yard run downhill from the house to the road? You could put in a small berm or hill of dirt along the road, with a garden on the uphill side to capture runoff.
- Does your house have gutters leading to downspouts that gush water after a rain? How about putting in a rain barrel or two? These won't collect a great deal of water, but every

bit helps, and it would be handy to have that water stored up to use when things are dry.

- Does your downspout pour out on a driveway or sidewalk, sending the water quickly to a storm drain? Try redirecting it to pour onto a planted area.
- Do you have an automatic watering system that turns on even during a rainstorm? Why spend money to add to the problem of runoff? How about converting to a manual system so that you water only when it is needed?

One by one, the cumulative effect of our individual efforts can make a difference. And a change in your yard is a great advertisement for creek-friendly practices. Neighbors can learn the connection between their own yards and the local stream and see ways they can make a positive difference.

We usually give little thought to water management on our own property. But we should, because even in Southeast Michigan, water is a finite resource, and our actions do have a significant effect on the quality of the water in the rivers and aquifers that we rely on for our gardens and for our personal use every day.

## SCIO BRIEFS and more...

**Roads:** With the advent of spring, it seems that the local activity levels pick up measurably. And roads are no exception. The Washtenaw County Road Commission expects to start work on the **Liberty and Wagner intersection**, adding turning lanes and signalization. On the other side of the Township, MDOT will begin work on the **Baker Road and I-94 interchange**, mirroring work completed last year at the Zeeb Road and I-94 interchange. This will include widening the bridge, adding an eastbound on ramp, some widening of Baker Road north of the interchange, and some work to reconfigure the existing entrances and exits. As part of this renovation it is expected that the existing rest area

will be closed and moved to a location further to the west. At the **Miller Road and M-14 interchange**, a new **park and ride lot** is being planned by MDOT. It will be located in the southwest quadrant, across from the new office building. It is also expected to serve as an AATA stop. Members of the Township's Planning Commission are providing input into the process, though the location falls within the limits of the City of Ann Arbor. **Lowe's** has agreed to extend the existing Jackson Road boulevard across the width of their new location. And that work should also begin this spring or summer. Lowe's has been approved for a new store which will be located on vacant land on the north side of Jackson across from the Creekside Grill. These improvements to Jackson Road represent a contribution by Lowe's to the Scio community in excess of one million dollars, resulting from Lowe's generous offer to mitigate some of the impacts their development would have on the community. And finally, it appears that citizen efforts to improve and restore **Foster Bridge** have paid off, and work will begin this spring on that effort. The bridge will be structurally repaired and strengthened, while retaining the existing architecture. Work will take about four months, and the **Citizens for Foster Bridge Conservancy** would like to landscape the approach areas, and while the Road Commission agrees in principle, money is an issue. The Conservancy is looking for help in the form of monetary donations, work crews, equipment, etc. The Conservancy can be reached by contacting Dan Walters at 2945 Newport, Ann Arbor 48103; tel: 734-769-0463.

**Developments:** Moving from roads to developments, I have already mentioned the new **Lowe's** store. Construction should begin this spring, and I might expect that the store would be open sometime between nine to twelve months. **Comcast** moved its local operations to Scio Township and is adding additional operations at the location, expecting to create 1100 new jobs. They are investing some \$20 million dollars in land acquisition, renovation and construction of a new support center. And as a part of their effort to enhance customer service, they

have established a customer survey website to evaluate their customer service experience. If interested, you can log on to the site at [www.commentsoncomcast.com](http://www.commentsoncomcast.com) and leave your comments about their service levels. Many folks have read that the 100+ acres **Farmer Grant's** parcel on Jackson Road has been sold, and wonder what will happen there. While there have been many tentative proposals over the years, development may well be difficult for many reasons. The Township has designated the frontage for office, research and light industrial type of uses, while the rear is slated for residential development at no less than one acre densities. That's about all that can be said, pending a concrete proposal. Approval is in the process for a new **Panera Bread** location on Jackson Road just east of Zeeb; the nearby **Harley-Davidson** dealership is undergoing an expansion; and construction is well underway for the new **Acura** dealership within the Auto Mall. Currently pending before the Planning Commission is the **Cambridge Club Villa's** proposal for 78 villas (single family condominiums) to be located next to the Cambridge Club Apartments, just behind the new **Meijer** store. Plans are also pending to move the **Subaru** dealership from its current location to a new site on the **Dunning Toyota** property.

**Police Services:** Acknowledging a \$1.5 million "error" in their computations, the County Board of Commissioners proposes to increase the per deputy cost to each community that currently contracts for Sheriff's deputies. Cost increases will continue until the County contributes no more than the equivalent of 1/2 mill toward police services, expecting the local contracting communities to pick up the rest. While there is no obligation that requires local communities to contract with the County for deputies, let alone provide police services in the first instance, Scio Township is and has been concerned enough about protecting our citizens that we have and will continue to contract for deputies. The real issue is about how County government spends tax dollars for the "health, safety and welfare" of County residents as a whole. Scio property

*continued on page 6*

# Mark your calendar!

## May Meetings

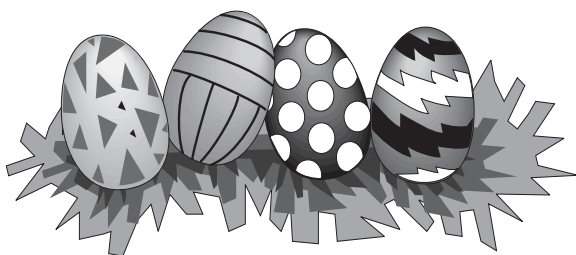
12 - noon	DDA
12 - 7:30pm	Planning Commission
14 - 7:00 pm	Board of Trustees
15 - 7:00pm	Zoning Board of Appeals
20 - 7:00pm	Board of Trustees
26 - office closed	Memorial Day
29 - 9:00am	DDA Roads

## June Meetings

2 - noon	EDC
9 - noon	DDA
9 - 7:30pm	Planning Commission
11 - 7:00pm	Board of Trustees
17 - 7:00 pm	Board of Trustees
19 - 7:00pm	Zoning Board of Appeals
23 - 7:30pm	Planning Commission
26 - 9:00am	DDA Roads

## July Meetings

4 - office closed	July 4th
9 - 7:00pm	Board of Trustees
14 - noon	DDA
14 - 7:30pm	Planning Commission
15 - 7:00 pm	Board of Trustees
17 - 7:00pm	Zoning Board of Appeals
28 - 7:00pm	Planning Commission
31 - 9:00am	DDA Roads



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owners send some \$5+ million to the County via the County's real property tax levy, and one might think that basic services would include some element of police services, particularly for those townships that don't have enough money for even one deputy. It appears that our County Commissioners think our tax money is better spent elsewhere, leaving many communities between the proverbial rock and a hard spot.

**Summer tax bills:** Donna E. Palmer, Scio Township Treasurer, reminds taxpayers that in July of 2003, ALL township property holders will receive a summer tax bill. The State of Michigan has decided to begin billing the total annual state education tax in July instead of December. To help calculate your additional summer tax, multiply your new 2003 taxable value by .005, which represents five dollars of tax per thousand dollars of taxable value. Those who have escrow accounts may want to notify their mortgage holders. Anything we can do together to help with this change will make it easier for all concerned.

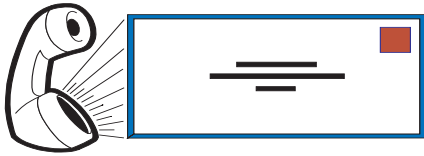


**West Nile Virus:** As we went to press, we received information from the Washtenaw County Health Department, which will appear in our next issue. However, it seems appropriate to pass on some information sources now. You can call the state's **West Nile Virus Hotline at: 1-888-668-0869.**

For more information call your health care provider or the Health Services Access Program at (734) 481-2505 or 1 (800) 440-7548. Finally, visit the Washtenaw County web site at: [www.eWashtenaw.org](http://www.eWashtenaw.org) and type in West Nile Virus in the Search box for additional information and links to other resources.

# **Scio Township Businesses**

**These Township Businesses financially support your "Scio Info";  
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# Who's who... ...and where

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Ann Arbor, MI 48103

*web site: [www.twp.scio.mi.us](http://www.twp.scio.mi.us)*

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*Correspondence for Township officials, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Economic Development Commission and Downtown Development Authority should be sent to the individual commission at 827 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103.*

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Carl Levin  
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