

Conservation Corner – Storm Water Regulations

The Town is in the process of developing a new storm water ordinance to comply with a new State of Maryland law adding more regulation of storm water. In April 2007, Governor O'Malley signed the Storm Water Management Act of 2007. Prior to this Act, environmental site design (ESD), was encouraged through a series of credits found in Maryland's Storm Water Design Manual. The Act requires that ESD, through the use of nonstructural best management practices and other better site design techniques, be implemented to the maximum extent practicable. Charged with implementation, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is in the process of addressing the requirements of the Act including changes to regulations.

In October 2009 MDE published the 2009 Model Standard Storm Water Management Plan. All local governments are required to adopt ordinances for development review, approval processes, and inspection of storm water control facilities by May of 2010. Although the new regulation provides a significant new burden on the Town of La Plata and other local governments across the State, the goal is to improve the quality of the waters of Maryland, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.

Agricultural runoff, litter, fertilizers, chemicals, and impervious surfaces all contribute to the quality of our streams, rivers, and waterways. Residents and businesses are encouraged to do their part to prevent contaminants from entering the storm water system, and the Town will soon be required to do even more as well. From pipes underground, to storm water control structures, to topography, and site design, many things impact the quality of surface water. La Plata will work to improve the quality of the water system and comply with State law, while maintaining the principles of smart growth within the community.