

# CERTIFICATION, RE-CERTIFICATION AND MANUAL FOR EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL UPDATES

Lauren Zdunczyk

---

AUTHOR: Urban Program Manager, Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, 4310 Lexington Rd Athens Georgia 30605, 706-542-1840

REFERENCE: *Proceedings of the 2009 Georgia Water Resources Conference*, held April 27–29, 2009, at the University of Georgia

---

## Education, Certification and Re-certification

As the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC) looks to complete its third year of the Education and Certification Program, more than 55,933 certifications have been issued to individuals involved in land disturbing activities. The Education and Certification Program was established in 2003 by House Bill 285. The goal of the program is to educate individuals involved in land disturbing activities about the importance of erosion and sediment control, thus improving and protecting Georgia's water resources.

During the Program's third year, GSWCC has introduced the second phase of the Education, Certification and Re-certification Programs. State law mandates that certifications are valid for no more than 3 years and that a certified individual shall be required to participate in at least four hours of approved continuing education courses as established by GSWCC. The Re-certification Program consists of four re-certification courses, one for each level of certification (Level IA, IB, II and Trainer). Each course is designed to be four hours in length and participants receive four hours of continuing education hours.

In addition to the GSWCC re-certification courses, GSWCC permits approved trainers to develop training courses that may be used to satisfy continuing education requirements. If a trainer chooses to develop their own re-certification course, they must submit the entire course to the GSWCC for approval. Applications for continuing education courses submitted for credit hours are evaluated on the basis of subject matter presented and time devoted to the topic. In general, discussions relating to all aspects of erosion and sediment control and land disturbing activities may be considered for approval of credit hours. Examples of acceptable topics include but are not limited to the following:

- Monitoring/Sampling
- NPDES General Permit/GESA
- BMP Installation
- Structural and/or Vegetative BMPs
- Erosion, Sediment and Pollution Control Plans
- Site Inspections

GSWCC will not approve third party re-certification course that focus on topics such as:

- Business Management
- Marketing Techniques
- Public Relations
- Sales Presentations

All approved third party courses are listed on the GSWCC's website. To date, GSWCC has approved five third party re-certification courses. Recently, GSWCC has approved third party developed Level IA online re-certification course. In the coming year GSWCC is taking steps in developing its own online re-certification courses that will be offered in addition to the traditional classroom style re-certification courses. In fiscal year 2009 (July 1, 2008 thru June 30, 2009) GSWCC expects that 12,000 certifications will expire and in fiscal year 2010 (July 1, 2009 thru June 30, 2010) 31, 000 certifications will expire

## NPDES Permitting

On August 1, 2008, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD) released the new National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permits for Stand Alone, Infrastructure and Common Development projects. The new permits have been revised to be in line with the more stringent environmental requirements of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The new NPDES permits require the Permittee to specify on the Notice of Intent (NOI) if discharges from the site enter into a stream within one linear mile of a 305(b)/303(d), impaired stream segment. To ensure that the Permittees's discharges do not contributed to water quality standards, the permittee must refer to the list of additional best management practices (BMPs). From the list, the permittee must choose a minimum of four. It is the permittees responsibility to review the 305b/303d list prior to the start of the project. The impaired stream segments are updated every two years.

Also, projects disturbing more than 50 acres will not be allowed without written authorization from the appropriate EPD district office. It is suggested, when submitting for this approval, the request is sent certified mail. If an individual does not receive a response from EPD in 35 days, it's deemed an automatic approval. Projects that are approved to disturb more than 50 acres

are required to choose four additional BMPs from the same list at the impaired streams.

In the event a lender/secured creditor obtains a property (i.e. foreclosure), the lender/secured creditor must file (NOI) 7 days before beginning work on site or within 30 days after acquiring legal title.

Another change to the permits is the permitted use of alternative BMPs. Alternative BMPs must have documented performance, be equivalent or superior to conventional BMPs, must be certified by the design professional, and must be shown specifically on the plans. The use of alternative BMPs will allow design professionals to develop and use innovative practices that previously could not be used. However, the permits give GSWCC and EPD the oversight and authority to review and disapprove the use of alternative BMPs. To assist both design professionals and plan reviewers, GSWCC and EPD have developed an Alternative BMP Guidance document. This document will be included in the new plan review checklists.

With the release of the new General Permits, GSWCC in consultation with GA EPD and the Stakeholder Advisory Board will be updating the certification and re-certification course materials, as well as the Plan Review Checklists and Model Ordinance. The new plan review checklists will be released and used January 1, 2009. GSWCC and EPD will host a plan review checklist training, which is free of charge and will cover the changes to the NPDES permits and new requirements on the checklists. All training dates will be posted on the GSWCC website at [www.gaswcc.org](http://www.gaswcc.org). The certification and re-certification material will be released early 2009. All GSWCC approved trainers will receive and be required to use the new material.

### **Revising the Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia**

GSWCC has also submitted a grant proposal to EPD, entitled, Setting Best Management Practices (BMP) Methods and Standards to be Included in the *Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia* (Manual). The Manual contains standards and specifications that are followed and practiced throughout the State of Georgia. The Manual was first published in 1975. Since then, the Manual has undergone five revisions with the last revision happening in 2001. Chapter 6 of the Manual focuses on the standards and specifications for planning, design and installation of erosion and sediment control measures. In January 2006, the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC) created the Technical Advisory Planning Committee (TAPC) to review Chapter 6 of the Manual and make recommendations on revising the Manual. GSWCC used the TAPC's recommendations to write the grant.

The objective of this grant is to obtain funding that allows GSWCC to establish a process and procedures for accepting new practices/products into the Manual. By the end of this project, GSWCC will have established benchmark standards for specific BMPs in the Manual for which new practices/products will be reviewed against. The project will be completed by meeting the following objectives:

1. Conduct a literature review of erosion and sediment control Best Management Practices (BMPs) to determine what scientific tests and testing methods have been accepted
2. Adopt tests and testing methods to test current BMPs in the Manual
3. Test results will be adopted as GSWCC's standards that will serve as the benchmark for new products to be approved or denied as BMPs in the Manual
4. Create a process for approving new practices in the Manual. The process will include what tests should be conducted and the testing methods that must be followed

The grant will also fund the creation of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Members of the TAC will be selected by GSWCC Board based on the individuals' experience in erosion and sediment control, certifications held (i.e. E&SC certification, PE, CPESC) and area of expertise (i.e. hydrology, design, ect.). Additional requirements may be added a later date. The TAC will be responsible for providing guidance to GSWCC to establish procedures, criteria for accepting new products and practices into the Manual, act as subject matter experts to GSWCC regarding other revisions to the Manual, and to determine the criteria for testing facilities.

GSWCC in consultation with the TAC will select an approved testing facility or group to conduct the accepted and adopted tests and testing methods to test the current BMPs in the Manual. The test results will become the Manual's BMP standards.

Additionally, GSWCC will work with other state and federal agencies to ensure all revisions are accurate and consistent with other accepted practices.