

# 20 Years of Stormwater



Fiscal year 2026 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Town of Hillsborough’s stormwater program. This summary provides background information, lists major milestones, outlines key program areas and highlights accomplishments from the past 20 years.

## Background

In 1972, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program was established under the authority of the Federal Clean Water Act. Phase I of the NPDES Stormwater program was established in 1990. It required NPDES permit coverage for municipalities with populations of 100,000 or more.

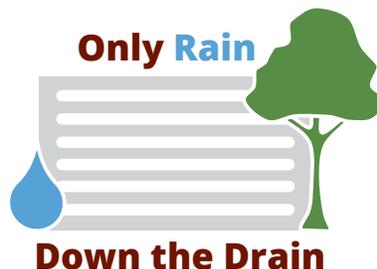
Phase II of the NPDES Stormwater program was signed into law in December 1999. The Phase II program extended permit coverage to smaller (< 100,000 pop.) communities and public entities that own or operate a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4). It required these smaller communities to develop a stormwater program and obtain an NPDES permit for stormwater discharges.

In North Carolina, the Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) administers the NPDES Stormwater program. NCDEQ issued the Town of Hillsborough’s initial Phase II permit, on October 1, 2005. The permit required the town to develop, implement, and enforce a stormwater program designed to reduce the discharge of pollutants from the MS4 to the maximum extent practicable. The program was implemented in phases over five years of the initial permit.

At the time, the town did not have personnel on staff to develop the stormwater program and opted to contract with Orange County through an inter-local agreement. Development of the town’s stormwater program by Orange County began in earnest in 2006.

## Mission

The Town of Hillsborough’s stormwater program is implemented by the Stormwater and Environmental Services Division within the Community Services Department. The primary mission of this division is to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff pollution entering the town’s MS4.



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## Program Areas

Pursuant to the town's stormwater discharge permit, six minimum measures or programs areas are required to be implemented. Those six program areas include:

1. *Education and Outreach*

Provide stormwater pollution related educational programs at both public and school events; maintain and distribute fact sheets on stormwater runoff pollution reduction and similar topics.

2. *Public Involvement and Participation*

Provide volunteer opportunities for citizens including trash/litter clean ups and planting/maintaining green infrastructure and planting riparian buffers.

3. *Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination*

Conduct dry weather screenings of stormwater outfalls and respond to illicit discharge and/or dumping incidents and take action to resolve them.

4. *Construction Site Runoff Control*

In partnership with Orange County Erosion Control, ensure construction sites maintain sediment and construction related debris onsite and out of the town'

5. *Post-Construction Runoff Control*

Review and approve stormwater management plans for new development and require construction, operation and maintenance of Stormwater Control Measures (i.e. wet ponds, stormwater wetlands, bioretention, etc.) that reduce stormwater runoff pollution.

6. *Pollution Prevention for Town Facilities and Operations*

Inspect town facilities and operations to ensure pollution prevention practices are followed in order to reduce stormwater runoff pollution prevention; maintain the town's MS4 including the removal of trash, litter, and debris.

Other program areas implemented by the Stormwater and Environmental Services Division include:

7. *Public Assistance*

Respond to citizen requests regarding stormwater runoff issues on their property.

8. *Riparian Buffers*

Implement and enforce the Neuse River Basin Riparian Buffer Rules as delegated by the state; conduct stream determinations and review riparian buffer impact requests and issue written authorizations as appropriate.

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### 9. *Watershed Improvement/Green Infrastructure Projects*

Plan, manage and construct watershed improvement projects and/or stormwater green infrastructure projects as required pursuant to the Falls Lake Rules and as outlined in the town's Sustainability Plan.

### 10. *Environmental Support for other Town Departments/Divisions*

Provide various environmental support to other town departments and divisions and participate in local/regional watershed, conservation and environmental groups as a representative from the town.

### Major Milestones

- 2005 NCDEQ issued the town's first NPDES Stormwater Discharge Permit in October 2005 (FY2006).
- 2008 Pollution prevention program for town-owned facilities began.
- 2011 Adopted regulations in the town code prohibiting illicit discharges to the town's stormwater system.
- 2012 Began implementing the Falls Lake Rules for stormwater, including nutrient standards for new development.
- 2012 Hired Terry Hackett, the town's first stormwater program manager.
- 2014 Obtained delegated authority from the state to implement the Neuse River Basin Riparian Buffer rules.
- 2016 Developed, adopted and began implementing a stormwater management utility and associated fee; created Stormwater and Environmental Services Division and promoted Terry Hackett to Manager of that division.
- 2017 Hired Stormwater Program Coordinator, Heather Fisher.
- 2021 Began implementing the Interim Alternative Implementation Approach (IAIA) in partnership with the Upper Neuse River Basin Association (UNRBA) requiring investment in watershed improvement projects to comply with the Falls Lake Existing Development Rule.
- 2023 NCDEQ conducted the town's first ever audit of its stormwater program.
- 2024 Hired Stormwater Technician, Claire Hansen.
- 2025 Rainfall from TS Chantal results in record flooding on the Eno River.
- 2026 FY206 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the Town of Hillsborough's stormwater program.

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## Program Statistics

The following section highlights a few selected statistics from each program area for the past 20 years.

### 1. *Education and Outreach*

- Number of Citizens Receiving Programs ..... 4,627
- Number of Students Receiving Program..... 11,016

### 2. *Public Involvement and Participation*

- Number of trees and plants planted by volunteers..... 6,427
- Pounds of litter/trash removed by volunteers ..... 63,492

### 3. *Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination*

- Number of Dry Weather Inspections..... 139
- Number of IDDE Incidents Resolved ..... 82

### 4. *Construction Site Runoff Control*

- Acres of Land Disturbance Permitted by Orange County Erosion Control ..... 996
- Number of staff Construction Site Inspections..... 2,477

### 5. *Post-Construction Runoff Control*

- Number of Stormwater Control Measures..... 165
- Number of staff SCM Inspections..... 608

### 6. *Pollution Prevention for Town Facilities and Operations*

- Number of Staff Inspections ..... 297
- Number of Issues Resolved ..... 39
- Number of Catch Basins Cleaned ..... 632
- Linear Feet of Swales/Ditches Maintained ..... 45,962
- Pounds of Trash/Litter Removed from MS4..... 30,609
- Pounds of Debris Removed from Street Sweeping ..... 184,084

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## 7. *Public Assistance*

- Number of Public Assistance Requests Completed ..... 215

## 8. *Riparian Buffers*

- Number of Stream Determinations Completed ..... 90
- Number of Buffer Authorizations Issued ..... 35

## 9. *Watershed Improvement/Green Infrastructure Projects*

- Number of Projects Completed ..... 21
- Benefits Provided:
  - Reduced Stormwater Runoff Pollution
  - Increased Stormwater Infiltration
  - Reduced Sedimentation
  - Increased Pollinator & Wildlife Habitat
  - Climate Resiliency
  - Education & Public Involvement

## 10. *Environmental Support Town Departments/Divisions and Local Organizations*

- Town Sustainability Plan
- Invasive Species Management Support
- Tree Board/Parks and Rec Board Support
- Urban Forestry Support
- Environmental Permitting Support
- Storm/EMS Support
- Inspection of Town Construction Projects
- Wildlife Management Support
- Clean Water Education Partnership
- Eno River Hydrilla Management Task Force
- Upper Nuese River Basin Association
- Piedmont Conservation Council
- Eno River State Park Advisory Committee