



GreenCO BMP Expansion Advisory Team Meeting Minutes – Oct 31, 2007

In attendance: Alison Peck, Brenda O'Brien, Bret Eastberg, Donna Pacetti, Harriet McMillan, Jane Clary, John Madden, Josie Joosten, Kevin Reidy, Larry Lesser, Mike Reis, Stu Feinglas, Tom Halverstadt, Wayne Anderson, Donna Ralston, and Sharon Harris. On the phone: Brad McKee, Curt Swift, Esther Vincent, and Ram Dhan Khasla.

The BMP Expansion Advisory Committee held its kick-off meeting on October 31st at Wright Water Engineers. Brenda O'Brien, GreenCO project manager kicked-off the meeting by welcoming the group, and reiterating the project goal and objectives as:

Project Goal: Enhance and expand existing GreenCO water conservation BMPs to promote landscape water conservation in Colorado, both within the green industry and among water providers and local governments.

Team Objective: Revise existing BMPs to add more technical substance, and begin identifying new practices to correlate with the "green movement" (also addressing issues such as sustainability, energy, reuse, recycling, alternative fuels, and transportation, among others).

Jane Clary, BMP Expansion project facilitator and Water Resources Scientist with Wright Water Engineers, Inc. conveyed the history of the BMPs (versions I & II) and training program, and provided an overview of the grant and the tasks associated tasks, which include:

1. Convene this task force to review existing BMP Manual to identify areas for expansion.
2. Revise manual & distribute on CD and/or hard copy.
3. Package BMPs for insertion into CWCB Conservation plans.
4. Revise training program materials.
5. Create broader awareness of BMP program for industry, water utilities and local governments.
6. Publicize project goals and accomplishments.
7. Translate BMP manual and training materials to Spanish.

Jane communicated the importance of Task 1. The group will be brainstorming revisions to existing BMPs and creating new BMPs to correlate with our changing environment.

Jane opened up the discussion and asked for initial comments and recommendations. An overview of these items/topics is provided below. These are "brainstorming" level comments; not all items will necessarily be discussed, revised and potentially later incorporated into the BMP Manual. Some topics may be beyond the scope of the Manual update.

Items/topics discussed were:

BMP Manual - housekeeping

- What will a new BMP manual look like? Should the information be displayed differently than it is today? Keep the same general format, but possibly add some subsections and update applicability matrix.

- Get enough information out but don't reinvent the wheel. Use and cross-reference existing resources.
- How will it be organized and laid out? We can talk about how they are grouped and laid out in the future.
- Create a topical index.
- Possibly add page numbers rather than BMP-based page numbering system (need to discuss further).
- Add glossary of terms - green industry, Denver Water and others.

Areas of Potential Change/New BMPs

- Include use of reclaimed water for irrigation: Denver Water's website includes information on reclaimed water tolerant plants. Donna P. will email to Jane to forward to the committee.
- Address irrigation water quality issues, not only reclaimed water, but also salts on the Western Slope.
- Look at other BMP resources for new ideas - Nursery and Greenhouse BMPs, Western / Eastern Slope issues - regional considerations listed in current BMPs.
- Look at other programs, LEED, EPA WaterSense, and other programs to explore what is out there.
- Look at golf course BMPs but keep at a low level of detail – may be complex with irrigation and fertilizer applications. John will work to sharpen existing BMPs with additional references.
- Consider expanding buffer zone BMPs, particularly with regard to preservation of native vegetation around water bodies. Look at case studies around lakes and swales to buffer zones for water quality issues. Create a checklist to address riparian issues prior to construction.
- Explore opportunities for integration with Low Impact Development Techniques and stormwater BMPs such as porous landscape detention, disconnected impervious area, etc. Include long-term maintenance issues.
- Sustainability BMPs – Alison to share more on this in the future. Sustainability and efficiency are not necessarily the same. Landscapes can be both. Incorporate more on the sustainability component/benefits of landscape. Related to this topic, possibly consider case studies that are basic good efficiency practices vs. cutting edge “gold level” sustainability practices. This topic requires more discussion and research.
- Add irrigation audits as a BMP – Amy Vickers irrigation audit tool – CWWC h2o audit tool spreadsheet.
- Garden Center BMPs - “front-line garden centers” - how can the retail/nursery side of the industry become more engaged in the BMPs?
- Medians and streetscapes – always a problem. Consider a BMP for these tough areas rather than requiring the user to cross-reference multiple BMPs.
- Consider creating a field manual (likely not in current scope, but would be useful in the future).
- Compile some type of checklist for regulatory considerations - discussion included topics such as landscape ordinances, regulations, plan review, regulatory. Challenge will be to have some type of general list that increases awareness of issues, yet recognizes the significant variation across local governments.
- Possibly create a checklist at the end of each BMP regarding key practices.
- Utilize existing resources with utilities and contractors.
- Address lifecycle of the landscape - how do the BMPs affect all levels from producer to consumer. Possibly include some flow charts of these concepts.

General Discussion

- Target certain audiences to strengthen awareness.
- Walk the talk - track data and educate employees.

- Soil amendment regulation in Denver and Aurora: new taps must prove soil amendments – inspectors to conduct site inspections.
- Include the benefits of landscapes – case studies, techniques and trends, what do we know today, what do we anticipate for the future? (Related to sustainability topic).
- Value of the landscape – what is your return on investment? What are the financial benefits of retrofits?
- Donna P. will contact Denver Parks & Rec to talk about landscaping/irrigation issues with regard to what has been implemented and how it is working.
- General discussion about landscaping/irrigation rules and regulations—changes are often generated/driven by calls to the utility, writing letters, and bringing ideas to the city. Has a large impact.
- Nov 7 - Mesa County Planning and city crews to create landscape regulations - soil amendments, irrigation specs, city guidelines – Curt Swift is involved with this (we will be interested to find out more after the meeting).
- Some non-members of the green industry may not be implementing/embracing the BMPs. How can we work to get involvement and buy-in? Create standards within the residential guides.
- Communication efforts could include education/tools for realtors.

Jane wrapped up the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance and input.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, November 14, 2007
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Wright Water Engineers, Inc.

Conference Center
Call in #1-877-295-4028
Password 6285794

Tentative Agenda:
9:00 – 10:00 am - Continue BMP brainstorming discussion
10:00 – 11:00 am – Summarize discussion and next steps