



# Phase II Storm Water Program

Spring 2022

## ***What Is an MS4 and Why Does It Matter?***

The acronym “MS4” stands for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System. According to 40 CFR 122.26(b)(8), an MS4 is defined as any “conveyance or system of conveyances (including roads with drainage systems, municipal streets, catch basins, curbs, gutters, ditches, man-made channels, or storm drains” owned or operated by a municipality or public body. These systems are permitted through the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) under their Phase I and Phase II MS4 permits. The major difference between a Phase I and Phase II system is the population of the municipality or urban area utilizing the MS4. The Phase I MS4 program covers large and medium MS4s, usually with population densities of 250,000 or greater and between 100,00 to 249,999, respectively. The Phase II program covers only regulated small MS4s, meaning that these systems fall under Phase II if designated as an urbanized area or on a case-by-case basis by the NPDES permitting authority (EPA, 2000).

Why does all of this matter? Why does the EPA care to permit and regulate MS4s? The simple answer is this: these MS4s drain to waters of the US. In Phenix City, the MS4 system drains to the Chatahoochee River. This means that anything that gets into the MS4 anywhere in Phenix City ends up in the Chatahoochee River.



### **Why should you care about this information?**

- **What we let into the MS4 systems in the US will affect marine life and other creatures, like us, that depend on that marine life for food and other consumer products.**
- **Think about the fate of the water that gets into creeks, rivers, lakes, ponds, and the ocean. Some of this water is used in agriculture. Healthier waters could mean healthier crops.**
- **Many jobs depend on the good health of our water systems and marine life. If we care about jobs in the US, we should keep the MS4s in the US clean.**
- **Many hobbies also depend on marine life. If you’re not a fisherman, odds are that you know someone who is.**

#### References:

EPA, US. *Stormwater Phase II Final Rule Who’s Covered? Designation and Waivers of Regulated Small MS4s*, United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2000.