

FORWARD

By: Matt Belcher, CGP

Confluences, as used in this guide, are a coming together of waters. Just north of St. Louis is one of North America's most important confluences: Where the Missouri River joins the Mississippi.

This spot, where two of the world's most powerful rivers come together, not only is a significant center of natural resources but for more than a thousand years, has been a crossroads for economic activity. The people that settled this area in mass numbers beginning about 600 AD considered this the center of the world, where resources were traded and for the time economically, literally was the hub of the yet to be discovered America and the rest of the North American continent. This is also where the well known "Corps of Discovery" launched their four year trek on one of the most scientifically significant efforts the world has known. Captains Lewis and Clark realized the abundance of natural resources at this confluence and the benefit to their corps and set camp here to ride out the winter and spring of 1804 instead of just downstream in St. Louis.

This guide is also meant to create a confluence. It was put together by the many stakeholders that it will benefit, and impact. It is created to be a guiding document for municipalities to educate them about stormwater issues and some practical ways to manage them. It is also a guide that can be used by industry to illustrate means to achieve better stormwater management and provide options to mitigate potential problems in a cost effective manner. In the same manner that the information for this guide was collected and assembled, the same outreach and interaction process needs to be used in its implementation to maintain the natural resources that stormwater can impact while sharing pragmatic experience to maintain the economic viability of the local municipality, county or state.

Having worked both in the field of code enforcement and in industry, experience has proven that the communications between all stakeholders is key and better, more cost effective projects are the result.

One important part of that process is recognizing the fact the advancements in technologies often outpace the ability of codes to accommodate them. Therefore it is imperative that codes, laws and other mandates, while important to maintain minimum standards and level the playing field in the industry, need to remain flexible enough to accommodate innovative practices and advancements in technology. Municipalities can take advantage of the wealth of knowledge and experience from those in the industry to improve local conditions and the knowledge of their own municipal personnel while providing guidance to those working to improve local infrastructure and development.

Matt Belcher is an experienced and nationally recognized consultant on the subject of High Performance building and development. He has been actively involved in the St. Louis area construction industry for nearly three decades, including six years as a top building codes official. In 2008, Mr. Belcher was invited to testify to the U.S. House Energy and Air Quality Subcommittee on Climate Benefits of Improved Building Energy Efficiency.