



BCD NEMO PROGRAM

What is the BCD NEMO Project?

NEMO stands for *Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials*, a three-year project of the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments, SC Sea Grant Extension Program, and the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management. The NEMO program focuses on the education of local elected and appointed public officials about nonpoint source pollution (NPS) and offers technical assistance for developing community-based strategies to prevent or minimize water quality impairments associated with NPS.

The BCD NEMO project is being funded through the US EPA and SC Department of Health and Environmental Control's Section 319 Fund. It addresses urban runoff within the SC Coastal Watershed, which contains all of the most urbanized areas in the region. However, the project benefits the entire region, with all jurisdictions being included in the education process.

The Need for NEMO

The NEMO Project is based on the conviction that reduction of polluted runoff can only be achieved through informed land use decisions at the local level. However, recent proliferation of new federal and state "nonpoint" laws and programs has underscored the growing need for local officials to be knowledgeable about the causes, effects, and management of polluted runoff.

The University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service originated the NEMO Program in 1991. The SC Sea Grant Extension Program has successfully brought NEMO to South Carolina and is currently facilitating it in four watersheds in the State. The Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments has received a Section 319 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to expand the NEMO effort to the BCD region.

Often, local officials are aware of the problems associated with urban growth, but are at a loss as to the best method of dealing with specific aspects of that growth. Problems concerning nonpoint source pollution frequently fall at the bottom of the long list of pressing issues that local officials must deal with every day. The NEMO program is designed to educate local decision makers about the impact planning, zoning, and land development decisions have on water quality.

NEMO's Goals

To develop a process for educating professional and volunteer municipal officials about the impacts of land use on water quality and about the options available for managing those impacts.

Project Description

The BCD NEMO program consists of three parts:

1. Introduction and overview of nonpoint source pollution
2. Local data presentations including a mapping component visually depicting the connection between critical land use and nonpoint source pollution
3. Recommended alternatives to present development patterns

Each jurisdiction will be provided with a series of maps illustrating the land use/land cover, impervious surface cover, and pollutants causing problems in the SC Coastal Watershed. They will also be given a series of fact sheets and a "Taming Stormwater Toolkit" to take with them for reference when introducing new policies.

What is GIS?

GIS stands for "geographic information system", which is, very generally speaking, computerized mapping. A GIS is a computer system capable of assembling, storing, manipulating, and displaying any data that is referenced to a location. This data can be anything from typical map data (locations of highways or houses) to natural resources data (topography, soil types) to demographic data (population density).

GIS allows geographic data of this type to be displayed, compared and analyzed in ways that would be prohibitively time consuming, or even impossible when using conventional maps and overlays. Because of this, GIS is rapidly becoming an invaluable management and planning tool in all types of professions worldwide. In the case of NEMO, GIS images are used to show the relationship of land use to water quality in a dramatic and understandable way.

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