# Identifying and Labeling Outfalls

## Introduction:

If you have not already done so, walk the grounds and perimeter of your facility during a storm event to identify where runoff discharges from the site (known as “outfalls”). Outfalls are locations where stormwater exits the facility property, including pipes, ditches, swales, and other structures that transport stormwater. If possible, walk outside the boundary of your facility to identify outfalls that may not be apparent from within your site. Be sure to note where concentrated stormwater exits your facility. For example: through a pipe, ditch, or something similar. These are usually good places to take a sample. Check for sheet flow leaving the property and see whether concentrated flows mix with the sheet flow. Identify where storm drain inlets or catch basins are located. You’ll need to determine where the storm drains send the runoff from your property. Does it go to your Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), to a combined sewer system, to the separated sanitary sewer, or directly to a body of water nearby? Are there any authorized non-stormwater discharges (air compressor condensate, a/c condensate, lawn watering water) mixing with stormwater before it leaves the property? Are there any areas where stormwater might run onto your facility from neighboring businesses?

## Discussion Points:

- Stormwater discharge associated with industrial activity
- What is an outfall?
- Where are outfalls located?
- Why are outfalls labeled?

## Discussion:

Knowing the locations of stormwater structures allows for documenting the direction of drainage. The information will be used to develop a Site Plan and identify receiving waters. Mapping of inlets and outfalls is to establish awareness of connectivity of natural and constructed systems, identify watershed boundaries using the best available data, and identify the waterbodies these flows may impact.  If your facility is large and has significant changes in elevation, a topographic map may be necessary.  However, if your facility is small and relatively flat, the best way to define the drainage area for each outfall is an on-the-ground visual assessment, preferably during a rain event. The outfall data will be maintained as a point coverage in the Geographic Information System (GIS), and the GIS coordinates used to identify the location of outfalls and associated bodies of water. Mapping of outfall locations is required on the Facility Site Plan and will allow for the tracking of runoff from the property. It is recommended that each stormwater outfall be identified with a legible tag or

sign. Place a sign at the outfall with a proper label to identify the point of discharge from the facility.

**As always, stay safe out there!**