

Stormwater FAQ and Glossary

Frequently Asked Questions (website related)

What are the problems?

In Greater Cleveland there has not been a collective effort among the communities or agencies to reduce the detrimental impact of stormwater on the entire region. The result: an increase in flooded streets, sewers, basements, erosion of our streams and creeks, and more pollutants (including litter, lawn chemicals, and oils) entering our local streams, rivers, and Lake Erie.

What can fix issues with web maps in Internet Explorer 7 and 8?

For the best performance viewing and creating web maps, it is recommended that you use the latest version of Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, or Internet Explorer. IE 7 and 8 are supported but have performance limitations when working with web maps. For example, you cannot drag and drop files onto the map, fewer features can be displayed, and you may lose your work if you leave the map viewer window without saving. If you need to use IE 7 or 8, installing Google Chrome Frame may improve your experience. The free Chrome plug-in allows your older browser to take advantage of newer web technologies in applications such as the map viewer.

Frequently Asked Questions (Stormwater program related)

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Why is regional stormwater management necessary?

Regional stormwater problems are numerous and difficult to solve. Through effective regional stormwater management, the flooding and erosion issues can be addressed effectively. Additionally, stormwater management can be used to reduce the pollutants from stormwater while protecting our natural resources. If these issues are not addressed today, the problems will continue to get worse and will be more costly to solve in the future.

Why should I care about stormwater issues?

Clean water is one of our region's most valuable resources. It affects your quality of life, your property values, and your community. Protecting our clean water is not something that can be done by one person or one community alone. A regional stormwater management program is a critical component in protecting our clean water.

What is being done now to manage stormwater?

Some individual communities are taking steps to reduce the impacts of stormwater. However, each community can only work within their own boundaries and borders to solve problems. This is problematic because the issue is regional, much of the flow from one community drains into another community. The Regional Sewer District has been proactive addressing stormwater problems through restoration projects and grant programs and those efforts will continue.

Why should the Sewer District coordinate and lead the regional stormwater management effort?

The District has been the leader in clean water for 40 years, protecting the environment and the health of over one million residents in 62 Greater Cleveland communities. As an established regional organization with both wastewater- and stormwater-management experience, the District is uniquely positioned to address the issues of stormwater because the problems most often stretch across community boundaries requiring multi-jurisdictional solutions and coordination.

How would we pay for this?

Since there are no dedicated federal funds available, local communities and wastewater treatment agencies are 100% financially responsible for funding stormwater programs. Monies will be obtained through a dedicated stormwater fee, which are typically based on the amount of impervious surfaces, such as pavement and rooftops.

In an effort to assess a fair and reasonable fee, those with more impervious surfaces, like shopping malls, will be charged with a higher "impervious" fee. In short, those who pave more will pay more. Credits reducing the fee will be considered to recognize individual efforts made to reduce a property's impact.

Are other cities charging for stormwater?

Yes, there are about 800 cities around the country and many cities and counties in Ohio, including Columbus, Cincinnati, Toledo, and Lake County who assess a dedicated stormwater fee.

Couldn't the current sewer bill charges pay for the stormwater programs?

Our current sewer bills are related to treating wastewater from homes and businesses. These monies cannot be used to fix the stream flooding and erosion problems across our service area our Stormwater Management Program will address.

Glossary

"Credit" – A conditional reduction in the amount of Stormwater Fee charged to an account holder based on the provision and continuing presence of, use, operation, and maintenance of Stormwater Control Measures that the District does not own, maintain, or operate; or based on the continuing provision of activities that may reasonably reduce or mitigate the District's cost of providing a regional stormwater management program.

"Equivalent Residential Unit" or "(ERU)" – The measure of impervious surface for a typical single family residential property that is used by the District as the unit basis for assessing the Stormwater Fee.

"Impervious Surfaces" – Developed surfaces that either prevent or significantly slow the infiltration of water into the ground compared to the manner that such water entered the ground prior to development, or which cause water to run off in greater quantities or at an increased rate of flow than that present prior to development. Impervious surfaces shall include, without limitation,

rooftops, traveled gravel areas, asphalt or concrete paved areas, private access roads, driveways and parking lots, and patio areas.

“Member Community” – Any city, village, or township wholly or partly within the District’s stormwater service area.

“Non-Self-Supporting Municipal Functions” – Municipal functions of Member Communities that are exempt from sewage charges as provided for in the judicial orders establishing the District. This exemption applies to municipal buildings which can be shown to house functions that are not proprietary in nature, including city halls, police and fire departments, service garages, and recreation facilities such as parks, playgrounds, indoor recreation facilities, swimming pools, and ice rinks. Nothing in this definition precludes the application of this definition to unincorporated Member Communities including townships. The final determination of Non-Self-Supporting Municipal Functions shall be made by the Board of Trustees.

“Permanently and Totally Disabled” – A person who has, on January 1 of the year of application for the Stormwater Homestead Fee, some impairment in body or mind that makes him or her unfit to work at any substantially remunerative employment which he or she is reasonably able to perform and which will, with reasonable probability, continue for an indefinite period of at least twelve months without any present indication of recovery therefrom or has been certified as permanently or totally disabled by a state or federal agency having the function of so classifying a person. An application for reduction based upon a physical disability shall be accompanied by a certificate signed by a physician, and an application based upon a mental disability shall be accompanied by a certificate signed by a physician or psychologist licensed to practice in Ohio, attesting to the fact that the applicant is permanently and totally disabled.

“Regional Stormwater System” – The entire system of watercourses, stormwater conveyance structures, and Stormwater Control Measures in the District’s stormwater service area that are owned and/or operated by the District or over which the District has right of use for the management of stormwater, including both naturally occurring and constructed facilities. The Regional Stormwater System shall generally include those watercourses, stormwater conveyance structures, and Stormwater Control Measures receiving drainage from three hundred (300) acres of land or more. The District shall maintain a map of the Regional Stormwater System that shall serve as the official delineation of the system.

“Regional Stormwater Management Program” – All activities necessary to operate, maintain, improve, administer, and provide Stormwater Management of the Regional Stormwater System and activities to facilitate and integrate activities that benefit and improve watershed conditions across the District’s stormwater service area.

“Residential Parcels” – Parcels containing single-family homes, as well as apartment buildings, townhouses, condominiums, cooperatives, and other multifamily housing of four (4) units or less.

“Stormwater Control Measures” or “SCMs” – An activity, measure, structure, device, or facility that helps to achieve stormwater management objectives including, without limitation, schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, operation and maintenance procedures, treatment requirements, and other practices to prevent or reduce the pollution of water resources, to control stormwater volume and/or rate, or to otherwise limit impacts to the Regional Stormwater System. SCMs shall be designed to minimize maintenance and reduce the potential for failure.

“Stormwater Fee” – The fee charged by the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District on all impervious surfaces within the District’s stormwater service area as authorized by this Title for the purpose of funding costs related to the Regional Stormwater Management Program.

“Stormwater Management” – The process and activities involved in planning, financing, design, improvement, construction, inspection, monitoring, maintenance, operation, and regulation for the handling of stormwater runoff, considering both the quantity and quality of the runoff and the stability and function of stormwater systems.

“Watershed” – An extent of land where Stormwater Runoff drains downhill into a body of water, such as a river, lake, reservoir, estuary, or wetland. The Watershed includes both the streams and rivers that convey the water as well as the land surfaces from which water drains into those channels, and is separated from adjacent Watersheds by a topographic divide.