

What is stormwater?

Stormwater refers to any form of precipitation: rain, snow, or melting ice. Stormwater is either absorbed into the ground and nearby bodies of water (streams, ponds), or it flows over paved surfaces into street drains and enters a sewer system. This is called *runoff*.

In cities, pavement has replaced the natural green spaces that slow the pace of stormwater runoff. Roads, parking lots, driveways, and sidewalks can't absorb water, so it moves quickly over these surfaces into nearby streams or sewers. As stormwater flows over the ground, it picks up debris, chemicals, and other pollutants that can contaminate our drinking and recreational water supply.

Unlike the residential wastewater (from toilets, showers, and sinks) that is filtered through a wastewater treatment facility, anything that enters a *storm sewer system* is most often discharged directly into local streams, the Cuyahoga River, and eventually Lake Erie.

Stormwater also impacts the *combined sewer system*, which carries both stormwater and residential wastewater in a single sewer pipe to wastewater treatment facilities. During heavy rains, large volumes of stormwater can cause these pipes to overload, which can lead to sewer backups, flooding, and the release of untreated sanitary sewage into the environment.

The inability to effectively deal with stormwater results in flooded homes and streets, more pollutants entering our waterways, and erosion problems.

Solving Stormwater Problems

Solving stormwater problems can be difficult, since runoff from one community can drain into another. A regional approach is needed.

An established regional organization, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District plans to join more than 800 communities around the country (including Columbus, Cincinnati, and Toledo) that have created user fees to support *stormwater management programs*.

Fewer flooding incidents, healthier waterways, and a better quality of life for Greater Cleveland are the goals of the Sewer District's stormwater management program.



Stormwater problems must be addressed regionally, and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District has the experience to manage them.



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

A vision for providing stormwater management services

The District envisions a stormwater management program that will build on its clean-water achievements of the past 35 years. We will continue to build projects and perform maintenance in streams and in the large pipes that carry stormwater. We will maintain our rigorous water-quality monitoring activities. And, to address regional drainage problems, we will expand regional watershed planning and floodplain management support.

The District can provide the technical expertise and guidance to integrate multiple objectives into projects — such as flood mitigation, “green” space development, and stormwater pollution reduction — that benefit each other.

We will coordinate educational programs that promote awareness of the importance of healthy watersheds, and develop regional partnerships to address the problems that cross community borders and boundaries.

The District can tailor its services to the needs of a particular community — whether it's helping communities comply with the EPA's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulations, assisting with grant-application writing, or partnering on local flooding and erosion projects.

Developing a fair and equitable rate

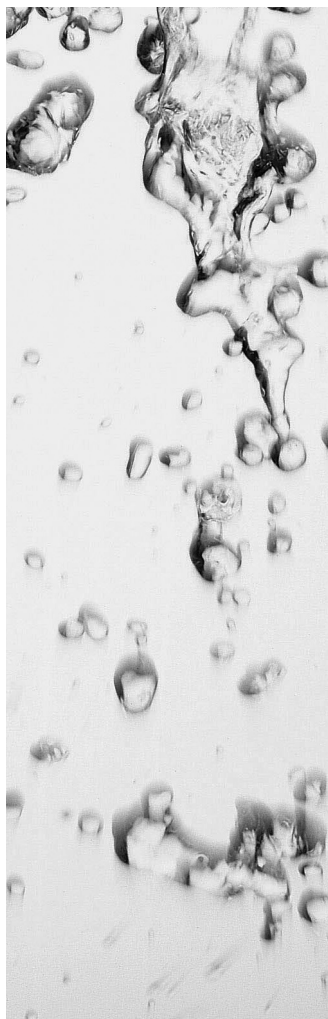
Funding for the District's stormwater management program will include the assessment of a dedicated stormwater user fee, based on the amount of excess runoff generated from each property.

Our clean-water work continues

Northeast Ohio is water rich. As we chart the region's future growth and revitalization, this valuable natural resource is a tremendous asset. As regional stormwater manager, the District will continue its mission: Assuring clean water for a greater Cleveland.



The District's proposed stormwater management program addresses stormwater problems that stretch across community borders.



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