

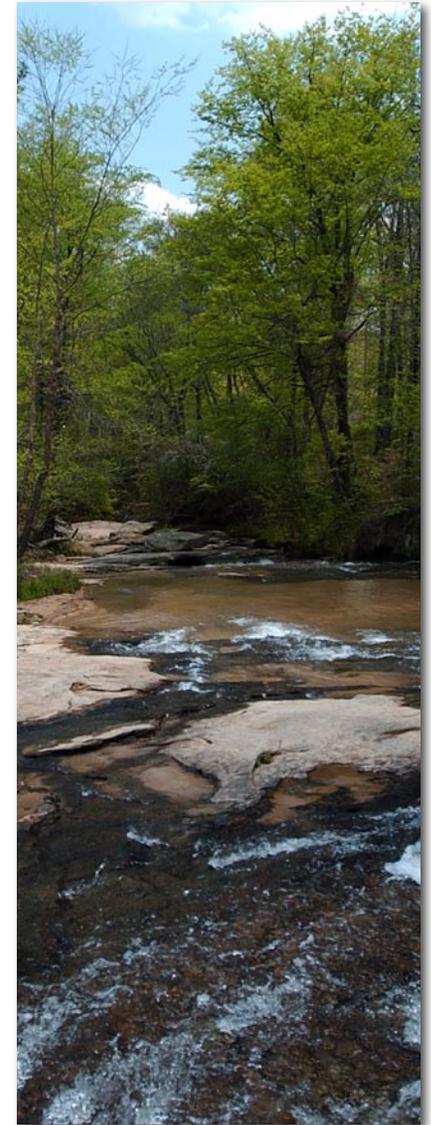


What is stormwater?

Stormwater is water from the rain. As rain falls to earth in agricultural and undeveloped areas, it is either absorbed or it slowly runs off and dissipates. Impervious surfaces such as rooftops and paved areas not only prevent water from being absorbed but cause it to run off at a much faster rate. As a result, unmanaged stormwater runoff can cause nuisance flooding and possible threats to public health and safety. Gwinnett County has infrastructure in place to manage this stormwater runoff, but the system must be maintained to keep the system clean and functioning. Additionally, pipes and structures are aging and need repair or replacement.



Example of stormwater pollution





Storm drains lead to streams

Water quality and stormwater runoff have become expensive issues affecting public service, public health, and the environment. Federal and state regulations on stormwater are becoming increasingly restrictive. To meet these challenges, the stormwater program must be upgraded to become a full-fledged partner within the Public Utilities Department and increase the service level for the public. In an effort to find a fair, equitable way to fund stormwater activities, Gwinnett County is implementing a new utility in 2006. The stormwater utility will provide a funding source for addressing customer needs like replacing stormwater pipes, reducing flooding and stream bank erosion, fulfilling regulatory requirements, helping citizens with expensive problems associated with older detention ponds, and reducing pollution carried by stormwater to waterways.

- Stormwater service fees will be based on the square footage of impervious surface (rooftop, driveway, etc.) on each parcel of property
- The fee will be billed in the summer of 2006, along with streetlights and other charges listed on the property tax bill
- Each parcel with more than 100 square feet of impervious area will receive a bill in 2006



Why am I being charged a stormwater service fee?

The County operates and maintains a system of pipes and channels that drain stormwater and protect our homes and businesses from flooding. This system is costly to operate and maintain, and is facing increasing regulatory requirements from the Environmental Protection Agency. The stormwater system has a backlog of needed repairs due to the deterioration and failure of hundreds of miles of pipe. Additionally, the state requires watershed protection for both newer and older developments, enforced through expensive conditions on discharge permits for reclaimed water. The new utility could generate up to \$34 million annually to fix these problems.



Drainage system repairs



How much is the stormwater service fee?

The stormwater service fee will be based on the amount of impervious surface area.

Impervious surfaces area is the most equitable way of determining services fees. Studies show that impervious surface and area are the best measures to determine the amount of runoff.

A home with 3,517 square feet of impervious surface would pay:

Year	Amount*
2006	\$27.08
2007	\$49.59
2008	\$70.69
2009 – 2011	\$86.52

**Two-thirds of the homes in Gwinnett County have less than 3,517 square feet.*



Is there anything I can do to reduce my stormwater service fee?

The Department of Public Utilities has organized a work group representing citizens, businesses, developers, cities, and environmental groups to develop a credits manual. Credits would partially offset the service fee for parcels that contain eligible best management practices (BMP). A BMP measurably reduces the burden on the public stormwater drainage system. The plan would implement a retroactive credits program in 2007.

For more information:

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