

WVSA's Stormwater Management Program

Importance of Stormwater Management in Our Community

Stormwater management involves managing the rain water that is not absorbed by our lawns and gardens (think of water running down your driveway or down your street.) Managing this excess water is important for the protection of life and property against the damage and destruction from heavy rains and flood events as well as to protect and enhance the water quality of our local and regional water resources. Because we all contribute to the problem, proper stormwater management benefits all of us and our community. It can promote benefits by reducing costs for correcting the harmful impacts to streams, enhance water quality, provide recreational opportunities, and help limit property damage and loss of life related to increased stormwater runoff.

Increasing Regulatory Requirements

In the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is charged with regulating stormwater pursuant to the Clean Water Act (CWA). Under existing federal law, municipalities in Northeastern Pennsylvania must curb pollution of the Susquehanna River by as much as 10% in the next five years. Portions of the stormwater requirements of the federal CWA are administered under the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer (MS4) Program. As part of their MS4 permits, the municipalities in the Wyoming Valley Region are required to comply within a framework of the following six minimum control measures:

1. Public education and outreach
2. Public participation and involvement
3. Illicit discharge detection and elimination
4. Construction site runoff control
5. Post-construction storm water management in new development and redevelopment
6. Pollution prevention and good housekeeping for municipal operations and maintenance

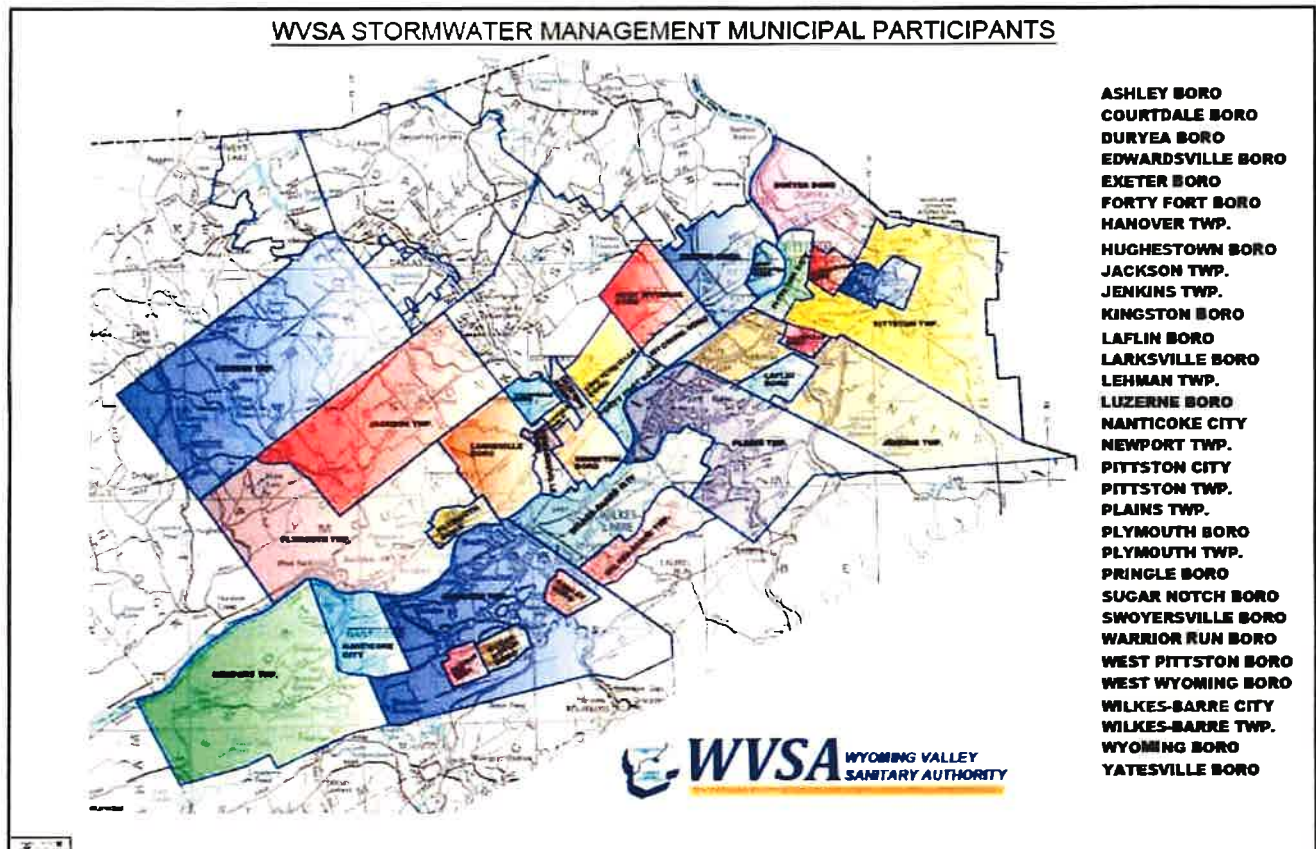
New permit requirements released in 2018 include the need to install projects, termed "Best Management Practices" or "BMPs", which infiltrate stormwater runoff into the ground to reduce the amount of pollutants entering local waterways including the Susquehanna River. By 2023, municipalities in the Wyoming Valley Region must have installed enough BMPs to reduce sediment entering local waterways by approximately 4,000,000 pounds per year!



Proper stormwater management is considered to be a vital infrastructure asset in order to protect the public health, properties, and downstream waterways from adverse effects that can result from stormwater runoff.

WVSA's Partnership with Your Municipality

The Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority (WVSA) believes it can serve the Wyoming Valley community well by coordinating a regional approach to stormwater management. Increasing regulation and aging infrastructure are placing a major cost burden on your municipality. WVSA has formed partnerships with the 31 municipalities shown below to assist in meeting the regulatory requirements listed on the previous page through a regionalized effort. Most costs of stormwater management are fixed and by spreading them out over a larger area, the cost to your municipality is reduced. In fact, the municipalities shown below are estimated to save between 58% and 70% in capital costs over the next five years by working together on a regional approach to MS4 permit compliance. As a group, they are projected to save \$274 million on operations, maintenance, and improvements through 2037! This cost savings is then passed onto each property owner through the deferment of tax increases and reduced stormwater fees.



Goals and Benefits of WVSA's Stormwater Management Program

Residents and businesses throughout Wyoming Valley will benefit from the enhanced operation and maintenance of stormwater infrastructure that controls pollution and reduces flooding. The goals of WVSA's Stormwater Management Program include:

- Improve local water quality.
- Comply with existing stormwater permits and increased state law requirements for the proper operation of stormwater systems in each municipality.
- Enable watershed-based planning and implementation to provide more holistic solutions to stormwater management problems at a fraction of the cost.
- Enhance operation and maintenance of stormwater assets by directing funds to each municipality to offset a portion of their annual costs. This will save money by extending the useful life of assets.
- Develop a dedicated and reliable funding source outside the common tax base.
- Implement a fair and equitable allocation of costs to property owners throughout the region.
- Educate the community on proper stormwater management including techniques and practices to assist property owners with minimizing the quantity of stormwater runoff leaving their property.

Role of Citizens

Proper stormwater management requires a joint partnership between WVSA and the community. As a property owner, you can do your part to reduce pollution of our local waterways through the following:

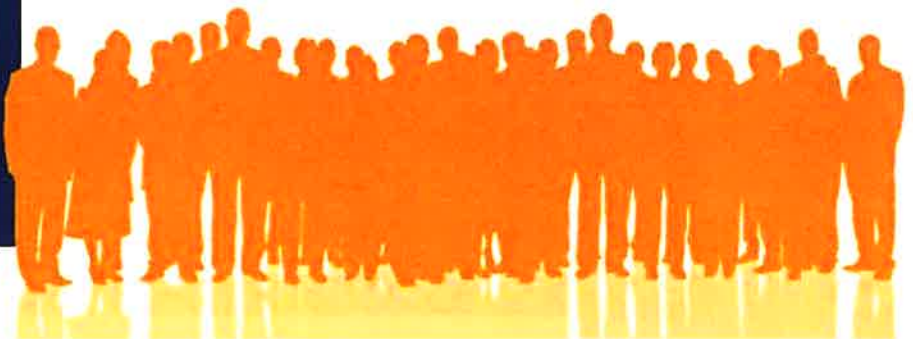
- Do not dispose of rags, leaves, debris, paint, toxic substances, or any other waste materials into stormwater drains. Think "Only Rain in the Drain."
- Do not over fertilize your lawn. Have a soil test before you apply fertilizer and follow the instructions.
- Utilize curbside recycling in your neighborhood.
- Wash your car on the grass, not a hard surface. Take your car to the carwash where they recycle the water.
- Pick up pet wastes and dispose of them in the trash. Always carry a plastic bag with you when you walk your dog.
- Install a rain barrel at your home. Rain barrels capture water from a roof and can reduce the amount of water that flows from your property. The collected water can be used for your flower beds, landscaping, and gardens.
- Do not flush wash waters or wastewaters into the storm drain.
- Keep our sewers "FOG-FREE." FOG stands for fats, oils and grease. Avoid putting FOG down the drain where it builds up and blocks the pipes.



Municipal Steering Committee and Focus Groups

The Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority members and the local municipal offices feel the best approach to stormwater management is through partnerships with each other and with the citizens, businesses, industries, and institutions in the Region. Development of those partnerships resulted in the creation of the Municipal Steering Committee in October 2017 which includes representatives from each partner municipality. It is used to develop and implement stormwater programming to benefit the region and ensure regulatory compliance.

In May and June of 2018, WVSA intends to meet with focus groups throughout the community, comprised of commercial, industrial, and institutional property owners. These sessions will be used to discuss local stormwater issues, benefits in regional management, and WVSA's role in implementing stormwater solutions. In addition to educating participants in WVSA's Stormwater Management Program, attendees will have the opportunity to collaborate and network together on stormwater related topics that affect the Region, as well as to serve as liaisons between WVSA and the larger community.



Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is WVSA involved?

As regulatory requirements and the cost of compliance increase, finding ways to reduce costs through regional collaboration, sharing of resources and economies of scale becomes vital. The use of WVSA as the regional stormwater authority allows the municipalities to garner efficiencies in the use of a trained staff, equipment, and knowledge of how to operate and manage a regional authority. WVSA has a working relationship with the municipalities, DEP and state legislators, and has a proven track record for meeting permit limits and implementing large scale capital improvements driven by regulatory requirements. WVSA may assume an expanded role in the future which includes operation, maintenance and improvements to existing storm sewer systems, along with meeting additional regulatory requirements anticipated in the future.

2. What is all of this going to cost?

All stormwater revenue will be placed into a dedicated fund used only for the operation, maintenance and improvement of stormwater infrastructure. Over the first five years of the program, funds will cover estimated costs associated with the following:

- Regulatory compliance (\$25 million)
- Program administration (\$5 million)
- Emergency O&M services for municipalities (\$8 million)
- O&M of installed BMPs (\$1 million)
- Stormwater parks (\$3 million)

3. Where will the revenue come from to fund this program?

Revenue will come from stormwater fees charged to each developed property in the WVSA service area. The fee will be based on the amount of impervious surface on a property (rooftops, parking lots, driveways, etc.) that inhibits infiltration of rainfall into the soil.

4. Is there a way for property owners to reduce their fee?

Yes. It is the intent that WVSA's Rules and Regulations will allow for credits. Credits are a percent reduction in the Stormwater Management Fee for having and maintaining infrastructure which improves the quality of stormwater leaving a property.

5. What is the anticipated stormwater fee?

All property owners with impervious surfaces on their property will pay a fee. Properties will likely be billed a tiered flat rate in which the average single family residential property is anticipated to be less than \$5.00 per month. Property owners with more or less impervious area will pay a higher or lower fee.

6. Why is paying a stormwater fee more equitable than property tax?

A stormwater fee based upon impervious area is more equitable because properties that create more stormwater runoff pay more, and properties that create less stormwater runoff pay less. Empirical studies show impervious area provides the best correlation to the quantity or quality of runoff leaving a property; as opposed to assessed property value.

In addition, all developed properties contribute stormwater runoff and should pay the stormwater fee; however, some properties are exempt from taxes. The general result is an additional savings to residential property owners of roughly 55% - 75% in paying for stormwater management through a fee as opposed to a tax.

Due to the savings derived by WVSA's regional program, residential property owners served by WVSA are expected to save between 70 - 93% by paying a regional fee to WVSA as opposed to paying their local municipality to provide the same services funded by property taxes.

7. When can I expect this fee to be enacted?

Implementation of billing is expected to occur October 2018.