Prince George County has recently adopted a Stormwater Utility Fee for property owners, that will be billed annually with the real estate tax bills. The idea behind a stormwater utility is that stormwater management is like other public services, such as water, wastewater and electricity, which are priced based on use. In a stormwater utility, fees are collected from residents and businesses and used for water resource improvement projects on a local level. The fees are also used to keep up with the costs of replacing and repairing aging stormwater infrastructure. Our goal is to improve Prince George County’s stormwater management for all residents countywide.

Stormwater management involves control of stormwater quantity and quality. Stormwater quantity management focuses on managing the volume or amount of stormwater as well as the speed of runoff. Stormwater quality management focuses on the prevention of water pollution by requiring best management practices. Localities utilize best management practices, development policies, capital projects to construct, repair and maintain stormwater sewers, ditches, and basins, and operational practices to ensure storm water management. The goals of these efforts are improved drainage, prevention of flood damage, and improved water quality for the County.
Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the stormwater utility fee?
A stormwater utility fee is a fee that produces revenue that is used to improve drainage, control flooding, improve water quality and implement local, state and federal stormwater regulations. The stormwater utility fee is charged to each developed property, because impervious surfaces cause surface run-off. Revenues from the fee may only be used for these purposes.

2. When did the fee go into effect?
The stormwater utility fee was adopted on March 25, 2014, and the first bills will be in the June 2014 real estate tax billing cycle.

3. Why is the user fee based on impervious areas?
Stormwater runoff from individual properties can be directly attributed to the amounts of impervious surfaces on the property. Impervious and compacted surfaces allow the water to fill up ditches, pipes and streams more quickly, increasing the potential for street and/or storm system flooding during heavy rains and increasing maintenance and repair requirements.

4. What is the difference between an impervious surface area and a pervious surface area?
Impervious surface areas are those areas that prevent or impede the infiltration of stormwater into the soil. Common impervious areas include, but are not limited to rooftops, sidewalks, walkways, patio areas, driveways, parking lots, storage areas, compacted stone, and permanent awnings. Pervious surface areas include undeveloped lands, lawns, gardens, and other forms of vegetative cover.

5. Who pays the Stormwater Utility fee?
Only developed properties are charged a stormwater fee. Properties paying the fee will include residential properties, commercial and industrial properties, non-profit organizations, colleges/universities, state and federal owned properties and parking lots.

6. Do tax exempt properties have to pay?
Yes, because it is a fee, like a sewer or water bill, which is not a property tax. Also, the fee may not be tax deductible for owner-occupied residential properties.

7. Do other localities have stormwater utilities?
Yes, there are approximately 1,300 stormwater utilities in several states, including Virginia. The localities that adopted stormwater utilities selected this approach because it is both fair and equitable to owners of developed properties.

8. I am on a septic or private sewer system. Do I have to pay this bill?
Yes. All properties benefit from the stormwater management program. There is no relationship between the County’s water/sanitary systems and the stormwater management program or fee.

9. Why do I have to pay when I do not have any drainage problems?
Everyone in the County benefits from the Stormwater Management Program. As stormwater runs off your property, the County will now have a program and funding to manage the increase in runoff and pollutants. Direct benefits may include complying with Federal and State mandates, protecting your property from upstream runoff, protecting property downstream from your runoff, providing safe roadways and improving water quality.