

# Water Watch



## Storm Sewer Fees: Questions And Answers

**Q: What is this "Storm Sewer" fee?**

In 1995, the City Council appointed a group of Orem residents, business, governmental and private individuals to an Ad Hoc Committee, entitled the Citizen's Storm Water Advisory Committee. After eight months of review and research, the Committee recommended to the City Council that the City adopt and create a Storm Sewer Utility. On March 26, 1996, the City Council passed the ordinance creating this utility which began operation June 1, 1996. The storm sewer fee was established at that time to fund the operations of this new utility. Each year, as part of the budget process, the City Council reviews the fee charged for storm water.



**Q: What are some of the major issues that were looked at?**

The committee saw water quality as a major concern. Storm water may carry with it pollutants that potentially can contaminate the City's culinary wells, as well as irrigation canals, and springs. Additionally, the Environmental Protec-

tion Agency (EPA) currently enforces strict storm water regulations for cities larger than 100,000 in population. Phase 2 of those regulations, which went into effect in March of 2003, is aimed at cities between 50-100,000. Orem's population is estimated at 90,000 and growing.

**Q: Why did the City decide on an "impervious" surface fee?**

When property is developed with buildings, pavement, compacted gravel or dirt, patios, artificial turf, etc., water is prevented from getting into the soil. These areas are termed impervious surfaces because they restrict natural infiltration. Impervious surfaces concentrate storm water flows and increase runoff from properties. Impervious surface fees seemed the fairest way to comply with the needs and issues of funding the work that needs to be done.

**Q: How is the storm sewer fee money spent?**

Revenue from this fee is used for the two aspects of the storm sewer program.

First, the money goes to improve

the quality of the storm water runoff before it enters our Utah Lake, Provo River, and underground aquifers. It also allows the City to enforce EPA regulations on those violating the law, and to improve our public education program. The money will also go towards developing standards and regulations to ensure water quality in the future.



Second, the money goes towards flood prevention through construction projects that improve runoff collection. It also allows the City to increase maintenance of existing and future infrastructure.

**Q: What is an "ESU" ?**

An ESU is an Equivalent Service Unit equal to the average impervious surface of a residential property in Orem. The Citizen's Committee hired an engineering firm to measure all commercial and governmental properties in Orem as well as perform a statistical analysis of the average amount of impervious surface area of a typical Orem home. A single family home has an average impervious surface area of 2700

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If you wouldn't drink it, don't dump it!

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We're on the Web!  
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square feet. This is equal to 1 ESU.

All non-single family parcels (commercial lots, retail properties, apartments, schools, churches, government facilities) pay a multiple of this base rate according to their impervious area. For example, a business with 27,000 square feet of impervious surface is assessed 10 ESU's. That business pays a monthly fee of \$4.50 per ESU or \$45.

### Q: Why just one flat rate for residential properties?

Most residences are very similar in their impervious areas. This was confirmed when we analyzed a sample of homes (200) in the City and found that 95% of all homes are clustered very closely in terms of impervious area.

### Q: Where can I get more information?

Call and talk to us at 229-7500. Your call will be forwarded to the

## Storm Water Quality

In our last issue, we discussed how the City tries to prevent flooding by constructing, replacing and cleaning storm water structures and sweeping streets.

The second mission of the City's storm sewer utility is to ensure that storm water runoff is as clean as it can be. The City engages in several activities to improve or at least maintain the quality of storm water runoff. Here are some of the things that we are doing.

### Street Sweeping

Not only does street sweeping allow us to keep storm water structures free from clogging, it also eliminates pollutants. The vacuum sweepers the City uses pick up sediment that can be laden with heavy metals, hydrocarbons and other nasty items that are deposited on roadways.

### Public Education

The City is also active in publishing and presenting information to the public through newsletters like this one. We also participate in Summerfest, and give presentations to school classes, scout groups and youth groups. If you would like to schedule a presentation for your group or organization, contact Steve Johnson at 229-7556.

### Installation of Treatment Devices

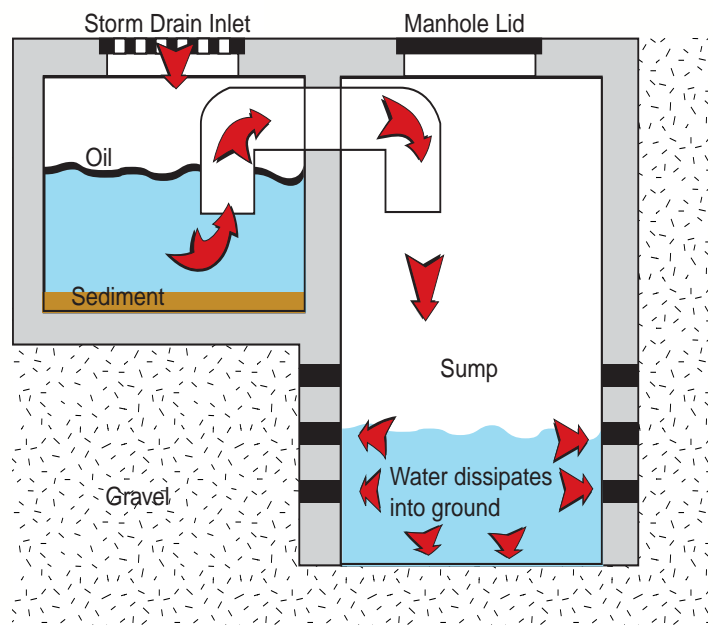
As streets are built and rebuilt, and as storm water structures are rebuilt and replaced, the City

is installing storm water treatment devices. Most commonly, the City installs oil water separators. These devices are also required for new construction of private commercial properties as well. The diagram at the bottom of this page shows how these simple devices remove sediments and oils from storm water runoff before it continues down our storm sewer systems.

The City is also making detention basins that are better suited for treating storm water. The best example is a constructed wetlands just south and west of the University Parkway-I-15 interchange.

### Storm Water Quality Credits

The City offers a program to mitigate the costs of storm sewer fees for non-single-family residential properties. Property owners who agree to implement best management practices receive up to 40% off of their storm sewer fees. A typical applicant receives about 25% off their storm sewer fees. To review the program see [http://pw.orem.org/html/credit\\_application\\_package.cfm](http://pw.orem.org/html/credit_application_package.cfm) or call Steve Johnson at 229-7556.



**Oil-Water Separator**