

WATERWAYS

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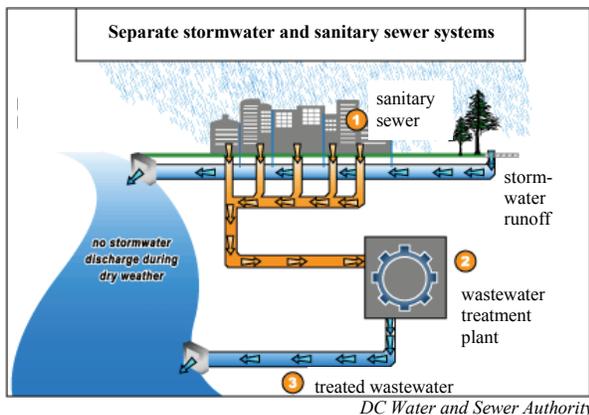
WATERWAYS is a semiannual newsletter to inform Durham residents about various elements of the City of Durham's stormwater management program. Public Education, Stormwater Infrastructure (drainage and flooding), and Water Quality are the three main areas in Stormwater Services.

Stormwater Drainage Systems

Your questions answered

What is a drainage system?

A drainage system includes natural and constructed conveyances for collecting and transporting stormwater, whether publicly or privately owned. It can include lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, wetlands, ditches, pipes, and culverts. Unlike sanitary sewage, stormwater is not treated before release into streams.



Who maintains the drainage system?

The owner of the property where a drainage system is located is responsible for its maintenance. The City of Durham owns and maintains stormwater infrastructure within the public right-of-way and on property owned by the City. Each City department is responsible for the maintenance of infrastructure on that department's facilities. Property owners must maintain drainage features on private property, including private roads. Maintenance should include keeping leaves, branches, and other debris from blocking storm drains, gutters, and ditches.

What is a drainage easement?

A drainage easement is a dedicated area of land reserved for the storage and passage of stormwater via open channel, pipe, or culvert. It is identified on an official plat of a

development and kept on file with the county register of deeds for public record (available online at <http://rodweb.co.durham.nc.us>). A drainage easement includes details of the rights and responsibilities attached to the easement area. Easements permit access to perform inspections and restrict construction in the easement area that would interfere or obstruct the free flow of stormwater.

Who maintains drainage easements?

The property owner is responsible for maintaining drainage easements identified on their property unless specified otherwise on the recorded easement.

Can I make changes to the drainage system on my property?

Drainage systems may not be changed in a way that obstructs the free flow of water, disturbs a protected stream buffer, or is in violation of any other local, state, or federal regulations. Before making changes to any drainage system the property owner is responsible for obtaining the necessary permits and approvals.

Is there a map of the drainage system?

A map of the drainage system features as identified from a stormwater inventory effort is available on "Go Maps" on the City's Web site: www.durhamnc.gov.

To Report...

Drainage Problems

State roads/highways: 477-2814

City roads and properties: 560-1200

Pollution

Durham creeks and storm drains: 560-7946

Erosion at active construction sites: 560-0735

A black rectangular box containing a white graphic of three curved lines on the left and the text "Stormwater Ponds" in white on the right.

What are stormwater ponds, and what do they do?

A common drainage feature in newer subdivisions and shopping centers is the stormwater pond. Ponds are one example of a stormwater Best Management Practice (BMP). Other types of BMPs include constructed wetlands, bioretention areas, and sand filters. Stormwater ponds, like many other types of BMPs, treat contaminated stormwater runoff from surrounding areas. Particulates, organic matter, and metals settle to the bottom of a pond while nutrients are removed by biological uptake. In addition to providing stormwater treatment, ponds can also help to reduce downstream flooding and stream bank erosion by holding back (or detaining) flood waters during severe rain events.

What about pond maintenance?

For ponds to function as designed, they must be maintained regularly. Typical maintenance activities include mowing the dam embankment (the earthen berm that holds back ponded water), mowing the access to the facility, keeping the outlet drains open and free of trash and debris, repairing eroded areas, seeding bare areas, pruning or replacing valued or required landscaping, and general policing of the site for litter. For questions regarding pond maintenance, please contact Mike Fuller of Stormwater Services by phone at 560-4326 or by e-mail at Mike.Fuller@durhamnc.gov.

Who is responsible for the maintenance?

In accordance with City ordinances and a recorded operation and maintenance agreement specific for each pond, the owner of the property on which a pond is located is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the pond. The owner of a pond is also required to have the maintenance and functionality of the pond certified annually by a North Carolina Professional Engineer or a North Carolina Registered Landscape Architect. If you have a pond in your neighborhood, more than likely, the homeowner association for your neighborhood is responsible for its maintenance. For questions regarding maintenance agreements, please contact Rhonda Spivey of Stormwater Services by phone at 560-4326 or by e-mail at Rhonda.Spivey@durhamnc.gov. For questions regarding the required annual maintenance certification, please contact Mike Fuller. Maintenance agreements are available on official plats, available at the Durham Register of Deeds Web site (<http://rodweb.co.durham.nc.us>).

Ellerbe Creek Watershed Improvement

The City of Durham has launched a project to study ways to revitalize the health of Ellerbe Creek and its drainage area. The City will gather information through field assessment, citizen input, and data analysis. The project will result in a list of prioritized potential watershed improvement projects and an updated watershed plan. For more information, visit the project Web site at www.durhamnc.gov/stormwater or call Project Manager Sandi Wilbur at 560-4326, extension 286.



In the Next Issue: *Stream Stories*

Durham Stream Watchers Michael Pollock and Jonathan Nyberg share stories from the streams they have adopted. If you have a stream story you'd like to share, contact Laura Smith at 919-560-4326, ext. 235 or email Laura.Smith@durhamnc.gov.