



City of Ferndale, Washington **STORMWATER**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is the City talking about Stormwater Drainage?

The easiest way to answer this question is to compare Stormwater Drainage to our Sewer System. All of our sewer pipes lead to the sewer plant where the sewage is treated for contaminants prior to being discharged into the River. Federal law requires that we treat the sewage and to ensure that we are adequately treating our sewage, the City has a *discharge permit* that regulates how clean the sewage must be prior to it leaving the sewer plant.



Federal law also requires that we have discharge permit for Stormwater. Just as was the case for sewage, stormwater must be adequately cleaned prior to its discharge. The difference is that for stormwater, the City does not have one discharge point – it has literally hundreds around the city in the form of streams, ditches, pipes, etc – all of which lead to local waterbodies and many times into the Nooksack River.

What does the Stormwater discharge permit mean for the City?

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit means that it is necessary for us to collect and treat stormwater before it goes into the streams and river. Since the majority of our stormwater (at least the stormwater full of contaminants) comes from our city streets, this means constructing regional stormwater ponds (from one to 10 acres in size) that will be able to collect all of the stormwater and treat it. The permit also charges the City with ensuring stormwater facility inspections (both during construction and then on an annual basis), water quality monitoring and public education and outreach.



I live in a newer subdivision that has its own stormwater pond. Am I also required to pay the monthly stormwater fee?

Yes. As you might understand from the prior questions and answers, most of the stormwater needs are city-wide. Most of the issues with stormwater stems from our street system. We have thousands of cars traveling throughout the City and it is the sediment, oils, and gas that drips off the cars and makes its way down the gutters and eventually into the area's streams and river that causes problems. See the City Ordinance 1612 for Storm Drainage Rates.

Since the 5 regional stormwater ponds will serve very specific areas of the City, we will be able to determine which properties will be served by each pond and potentially establish specific fees that will take into account the existence of on-site stormwater facilities.



I don't live in the Ferndale City limits. Will I be assessed the month fee?



It depends. Our stormwater responsibilities include all of the area in our Urban Growth Area (UGA). So if you live within the UGA, you will be charged. If you live outside of the UGA, you will not be charged.

Since the City is considering stormwater fees, will the City install drainage for my property that has seasonal flooding?



At this time, the City does not have the money to attend to private property stormwater issues, and legally is not required to do so. Stormwater issues on private property are the responsibility of that property owner.