

STORM WATER UTILITY FEE

Our utility bill comes to us with a lot of information to sift through and disseminate. We see a charge for water consumption, a charge for sewer treatment, a charge to dispose of our garbage, and while all these seem pretty clear to us a Storm Water Utility Fee appears and we ask, “What is this”? Read on.....

This fee helps to control flooding, assists in taking care of existing drainage problems for the greater good in the community, and provides funding for the City to comply with EPA regulations and can help fund smaller Capital Improvement Projects related to drainage issues.

The Storm Water Utility or Drainage Fee is based on impervious surface area within the City. City Staff and our Engineering Firm, Freese and Nichols, Inc., used an average of the City’s residential units to determine the amount of impervious surface to calculate an ERU (Equivalent Residential Unit). After the average ERU was calculated each residential unit was classified as one (1) ERU, which equals thirty-nine hundred square feet (3900 sq. ft.) of impervious surface. Commercial property fees are calculated by taking measurements of their impervious surface area and dividing it by thirty-nine hundred square feet (3900 sq. ft.), which determines the number of ERU’s that apply to their development. Impervious surfaces represent surfaces that contribute runoff into the storm water system and are mainly constructed areas that consist of rooftops, sidewalks, parking lots, driveways, pool decks, and patios that cover the earth with impenetrable materials such as asphalt, concrete, brick, stone, and gravel. These materials seal surfaces, repel water, and prevent precipitation from infiltrating soils. Soils compacted by urban development are also highly impervious. **Everyone** contributes to impervious coverage. As communities develop the amount of impervious coverage increases. These surfaces concentrate and increase the flow of storm water within a community or region. This increases the potential for flooding and is a major factor in the degradation of water quality.

This charge is a service fee. The City expends the funds to provide a service that otherwise would not be provided through property tax or sales tax. It is a restricted fund that can only be utilized for drainage activity.

The EPA now enforces strict storm water drainage regulations under the Clean Water Act. These regulations are the result of an unfunded federal mandate to clean up pollution from storm water, which drains into rivers, lakes, and streams. Because these regulations are unfunded by the federal government each City must provide funding to meet these requirements. The monthly drainage fee in part pays for **work we must do** to meet these new EPA drainage standards and requirements.

Will drainage fees be used to stop flooding? Many of the drainage projects that are needed, when completed, will assist in reducing the factors that contribute to flooding problems within the community.

What is Storm Water Pollution? Storm Water Pollution is the untreated contaminated water that drains off rooftops, and other impervious surfaces and flows into the storm water drainage system. Pollutants are picked up as water (from rain, hoses, sprinklers, etc.) drains from streets, parking lots, and lawns and enters catch basins throughout the City. Any pesticides, petrochemicals, heavy metals, or other materials that are on these impervious surfaces have the potential of being washed into the drainage system. From there, the storm

water flows through a system of pipes and open channels into streams and eventually into Lake Lewisville.

Is Corinth's runoff really a pollution concern? YES! All of the runoff that occurs in Corinth eventually flows into Lake Lewisville, which is our primary source of water and that of **many** metroplex cities. We are located in the Trinity River Water Shed, which includes 17,965 square miles, or approximately six percent (6%) of the states landmass. The Trinity River serves as the primary water supply to more than five (5) million people in the upper basin centered around the Dallas/Ft. Worth metropolitan area. Our efforts affect **MANY** individuals that do not know who you or I are.

Will paying this charge lower my wastewater bill? The storm water drainage system and the wastewater system are completely separate. The storm water drainage network of ditches, streams, and underground pipes carries away runoff water from storms and also from hoses and sprinklers. This water goes directly back to rivers, lakes, and streams without being treated. The wastewater sewer system intakes water which goes down the drains inside your homes or business. The water from your sinks, toilets, washing machines etc. is collected and sent to the Upper Trinity Water Reclamation Center Plant and is filtered and treated before it is discharged.

So, once again, we ask, "What is this fee?" It is a service fee. It is a monthly charge that graduated over a five-year period to reach \$5.00 per ERU, but now has increased to \$6.00 per ERU, to use to protect our residents and the environment. It is a fee to protect our quality of life, the quality of life for our children and our grandchildren or those of others. It is a fee established in our community to help ensure the health, safety, and welfare of **ALL**.

Tips on Keeping our water clean and free of harmful contaminants:

- Properly dispose of household hazardous waste; such as paint, used oil, chemicals, and pesticides.
- Use native and adaptive plants; they require less water and fertilizers...thus, both conserving water and protecting water quality.
- Never pour grease or oil down a drain because it pollutes the water and could clog your drain.

To learn how you can safely dispose of your household hazardous waste, please visit www.cityofcorinth.com and visit our Public Works Storm Water Management Section.