



## City of Asheville Stormwater Services

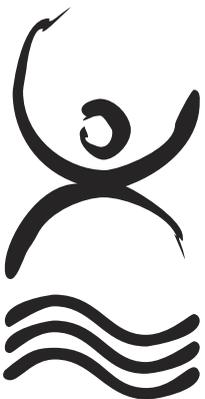
Report to Citizens



City of Asheville Stormwater Services, P.O. Box 7148, Asheville, NC 28802 • (828) 232-4567

# Remember...We All Live Downstream

The Asheville stormwater services utility was adopted by City Council in July 2005, based on the recommendation of a citizen advisory committee. This report will give you an update on stormwater services activities since then.



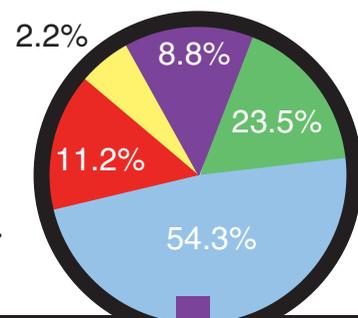
### First some background. What is stormwater?

As rainwater flows toward storm drains and catch basins, it picks up pollutants from streets, lawns, and parking lots. This water flows untreated to local waterways. Polluted stormwater runoff is the largest source of water pollution in North Carolina.

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Stormwater Program is an effort to preserve, protect and improve the nation's water resources from polluted runoff. The program requires the City of Asheville, and many other municipalities with storm sewer systems that discharge runoff directly into surface waters, to obtain a federal stormwater permit and maintain a stormwater management plan to help protect water quality and human health. There are six required components of the NPDES Phase II Stormwater permit. No state or federal resources are provided to municipalities to implement these measures.

## How Stormwater Fees Were Used in 2005-2006

The stormwater utility collected approximately \$2.3 million in fees during the first year. Expenditures were a little over \$2.1 million, distributed as shown, with the remainder going into a reserve fund for large capital projects.



**Capital projects** included improvements to the public storm drain system: installing new pipe and installing or rebuilding catch basins on Asheville streets to help prevent unsafe road flooding. The city also added to its equipment that clears storm drain structures. This new equipment is used on scheduled routes rather than only in response to requests or complaints, and now unclogs about 250 drains a month. Clean storm drains are less likely to back up and cause flash flooding during heavy rains.

**Watershed analysis** projects underway include work to develop stormwater master plans for Ross Creek and Dingle Creek: analyzing the existing storm drainage infrastructure and capacity, determining needed improvements, developing recommended construction schedules and evaluating possible water quality improvements. Flood warning rain gauges are part of a larger project to forecast and mitigate possible future flooding of the Swannanoa and French Broad Rivers.

More information about the watershed and flood mitigation projects can be found under Projects & Initiatives on the city Web site ([www.ashevillenc.gov](http://www.ashevillenc.gov)).

**Phase II programs** are the required elements of the city’s permit: Public Education and Outreach, Public Participation and Involvement, Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination, Construction and Post-Construction Runoff Control, and Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping. Stormwater Services enforces erosion and sediment control measures associated with construction activities and reviews new development for compliance with stormwater plans. A watershed policy committee of interested citizens and organizations has been formed to advise the city in the development of a new ordinance addressing post-construction runoff. The policies and standards will aim to prevent flooding, preserve streams and channels, and minimize water pollution without arresting new or infill development.



In addition, the city purchased a **new street sweeper**. Street sweeping is a critical activity to improve water quality; it removes dirt, debris and litter before stormwater can wash them into streams. The new sweeper and a new route-based sweeping system allow city workers to sweep all curbed streets on a monthly rotation – more than 400 miles of city streets each month. City sweepers collected more than 2.9 million pounds of dirt and debris from city streets in 2006.

**Many of the required activities are directed toward raising public awareness of stormwater pollution issues.** A stormwater education program for school-age children has been developed and is available to elementary school teachers. Stormwater Services had booths and information at an Earth Day celebration, events at various community meetings and at the 2006 Goombay! festival. We are available to speak at neighborhood association meetings and civic groups, and welcome opportunities to answer residents’ questions about stormwater. More information, including links to articles and tips, is available in the Residents section on the city Web site under Stormwater Utility.



Most people have no idea how much impact individual actions have on water quality. Here are a few simple changes that have big results.

**Car washing:** Use the minimum amount of detergent, and wash your car on the grass or on gravel. Even better, take your car to a car wash where the water is recycled.

**Pets:** Clean up pet waste and dispose of it properly.

**Fall leaves:** Leaves swept or blown to the street can clog storm drains and lead to flooding. The leaves also harm our waterways by using up oxygen as they decay.

Compost your leaves, use them as mulch or use yard waste bins for disposal.

**Snow:** Stormwater is not only caused by rain – even melting snow is “stormwater.” It picks up dirt, litter and pet waste and carries these pollutants into our rivers.

*Above: Did you know that stormwater flows – untreated – to the nearest river, stream or lake? In a fall 2005 survey, only about 1/3 of NC residents knew this. Festival displays, like the one at Goombay!, provide information about stormwater pollution.*



*Below: The 2006 Big Sweep river cleanup collected piles of trash and other pollutants. Much of this washed into the river with stormwater.*

Because stormwater does not respect political boundaries, the city, along with 12 other municipalities, is part of the WNC Stormwater Partnership organized by the Land-of-Sky Regional Council. The Partnership has a Web site ([www.WNCstormwater.org](http://www.WNCstormwater.org)) providing general stormwater information and a host of links to more detail and related topics, and collaborates in regional education efforts. Other partners include RiverLink and Quality Forward. River and litter cleanups and Adopt-a-Stream and Adopt-a-Street programs improve water quality for all of us.

**Want to get involved?** Call 259-5981 to request a speaker for your school or group, or to ask about volunteer programs. Upcoming projects include marking local storm drains as a reminder that stormwater – and everything in it – flows directly into our streams, rivers and lakes. This is a great way for schools, clubs, Boy and Girl Scout troops and neighborhoods to support water quality and participate in raising awareness.



## BOTTOMS UP.

**CAR WASH SOAP**

**YARD WASTE**

**LITTER**

**SEDIMENT**

Everything that goes into our storm drains makes its way straight to our streams. And into what we drink and where we swim. Find out more.

[www.WNCstormwater.org](http://www.WNCstormwater.org)