

**Why do I pay the BPW a Storm Water Charge?** The BPW charges its customers a Storm Water charge to maintain the storm water infrastructure and manage its effects for the greater good of the community.

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**ISSUE: Storm Water Charges. The BPW has determined that funds are required to maintain the storm water system and plan for future improvements.**

**BACKGROUND:** Storm water runoff is generated when precipitation from rain and snowmelt events flows over land or impervious surfaces and does not percolate into the ground. As the runoff flows over the land or impervious surfaces (paved streets, parking lots, and building rooftops), it accumulates debris, chemicals, sediment or other pollutants that could adversely affect water quality if the runoff is discharged untreated. Depending on the intensity and duration, stormwater does often run off pervious areas such as lawns, golf courses and farm fields. Since this water can't be absorbed into the ground and returned to the natural water cycle, it needs to be managed. Storm drains on the street and other surfaces allow the storm water to be diverted thereby mitigating street flooding and water damage to homes and businesses.

The Clean Water Act (CWA) is the cornerstone law of surface water quality protection in the United States. The implementing regulations from CWA and other Federal and State laws are increasing every year.

Historically, storm water was directed straight to surface water such as the canal without treatment. Present regulations require new developments such as Pilottown Village, Canary Creek, Anglers Nest, Hotel Blue, etc. to have retention basins to settle out some contaminants. Although not generally required in tidal areas, storm water discharge rate control structures are also required to assure the rate of runoff from a site post-development does not exceed the pre-development rate.

The BPW encourages Lewes property owners to include rain gardens, rain barrels, and maximize porous surfaces in their landscaping designs to minimize storm water runoff. The City of Lewes uses street cleaning machines to keep curb and gutter areas clear of debris, allowing more efficient collection of storm water catch basins. It is important for residents to keep storm drains clear of debris and prevent litter from entering catch basins as ultimately this will end up in the inland bays.

**STATUS:** The BPW continues to work with the City of Lewes, University of Delaware and other appropriate State and Federal agencies to improve storm water practices and policies in the areas served by the BPW. **The \$5 Storm Water Fee covers maintenance to keep the storm water pipes open throughout the service area and ensures that major road arteries are kept open in times of rain events for the “greater good of the community”.** This fee only meets current operational and maintenance needs for the backbone system.

**QUESTIONS:** If you have further questions about the basis for the storm water charge, please contact the BPW General Manager, Darrin Gordon: 302-645-6228 or go to: [www.ci.lewes.de.us/BPW-Utilities](http://www.ci.lewes.de.us/BPW-Utilities)

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