

## Understanding Anne Arundel County's Watershed Protection and Restoration Fee

Stormwater runoff originates during precipitation events when water flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces such as streets and rooftops increase runoff by preventing water from soaking into the ground. Water running over impervious surfaces can pick up sediment, chemicals, debris, and toxins which are carried to local waterways. These pollutants prevent waterways from being fishable and swimmable.

In 2012 the State of Maryland passed the Watershed Protection and Restoration Program (HB 987) which mandates the development of a stormwater remediation fee for counties subject to a certain municipal stormwater permit. The intention of this fee is to manage the pollution carried by stormwater into local waterways.

The collected fees are placed in a *dedicated fund* and used to finance projects that treat polluted stormwater. Examples of these projects include, but are not limited to, stream restoration, coastal plain outfalls, stormwater pond retrofits, stormwater facility inspection, maintenance and upgrades, rain gardens, stormwater educational programming, and capital projects to restore streams, stormwater ponds, storm drain outfalls, and replace aging storm drains and culverts. The Watershed Protection and Restoration Fee (WPRF) is similar to fees for other public services such as sewer, drinking water, and highways.

### ***Who has to pay the Watershed Protection and Restoration Fee?***

The WPRF applies to the nine largest counties in Maryland (Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's) and Baltimore City, which are federally required to treat stormwater runoff. Property owners within these jurisdictions, with some exceptions, are required to pay the WPRF. The charge structure is established independently by each county/city and differs across the State.

### ***What does the Watershed Protection and Restoration Fee look like in Anne Arundel County?***

The Watershed Protection and Restoration Fee is calculated based on the amount of impervious surface on your property, and the type of property you own. Calculations are based on the Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU). One ERU = 2,940 square feet of impervious surface, which is the median amount of impervious surface on residential properties. The fee for one ERU is \$85, although the fee is being phased in over time, and fees will be slightly less over the first two years it is in place. See the Anne Arundel County Watershed Protection and Restoration Fee website for up-to-date rates, and to determine your property's zoning: <http://www.aacounty.org/DPW/Stormwater/WPRF.cfm#.UjNCeMakrFM>

### ***Residential homeowners***

Three separate billing tiers represent properties in residential zones with estimated imperviousness

that is 40% less than, equal to, or twice the base ERU of 2,940 square feet. Zoning districts R1, R2, and R5 are assessed one ERU = \$85. Zoning districts R10 and R15 are assessed 0.4 ERU = \$34. Zoning districts RA and RLD are assessed 2 ERU = \$170.

#### **Non-residential property owners**

Non-residential fees are based on a property's total actual measured impervious surface. Owners are assessed the base rate of \$85 for every 2,940 sq. ft. of impervious cover on their property. The rate structure for non-residential properties is calculated based on the following:

- The total square feet of imperviousness DIVIDED BY:
- base ERU of 2,940 square feet MULTIPLIED BY:
- base ERU Rate of \$85.

#### **Credit/incentive programs:**

Two county programs allow property owners to request monetary credits for stormwater management improvements which have been implemented on their properties.

#### **Stormwater Management Property Tax Credit Program**

- Provides a reduction in County Property Taxes for qualified stormwater improvements. Applications must be submitted within 45 days after completion of qualifying improvements.

#### **Watershed Protection and Restoration Fee Credit Program (in development)**

- Will provide a reduction in WPRF by up to

50% for non-residential properties, to account for existing or planned stormwater improvements, and residential properties with maintenance agreements for stormwater management practices installed.

#### **What can I do to help address stormwater runoff pollution?**

Among other practices, residents can install rain barrels, rain gardens, and porous pavers, and practice Bay-Wise landscaping to help in the fight against stormwater runoff. Always remember with stormwater - *slow it down* and *soak it up!*

#### **Additional Resources**

Maryland Department of the Environment  
Stormwater Fee FAQ:

<http://www.mde.state.md.us/programs/Marylander/Pages/StormwaterFeeFAQ.aspx>

Anne Arundel County Watershed Protection and Restoration Fee website:

<http://www.aacounty.org/DPW/Stormwater/WPRF.cfm>

House Bill 987

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?ys=2012rs%2fbillfile%2fhib0987.htm>

Contact Jackie Takacs ([jtakacs@umd.edu](mailto:jtakacs@umd.edu), 240-393-6508) Watershed Restoration Specialist for Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties, to answer your questions about the fee and what you can do to reduce stormwater runoff on your property.

*Please note: This factsheet is intended to provide an overview of the watershed protection and restoration fee at the time of publication. For more updates and information please go to: <http://www.aacounty.org/>*

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