

# Fact Sheet

## Managing stormwater in Sarasota County

## Stormwater

**We are all connected by waterways comprising our drainage system.**

- Everyone lives in a watershed. When stormwater drains from our property, it empties into a watershed. Thus the impact from stormwater extends far beyond our property or neighborhood.
- **Sarasota County provides:**
  - Engineering services to properties in the unincorporated county and the City of Sarasota.
  - Maintenance service to unincorporated county properties west of the Myakka River basin and the City of Sarasota.
  - Design and construction of projects in areas with structure flooding and/or severe street flooding. This is funded through area-specific assessments.
- **How is the work funded?**
  - Stormwater assessments are based on the amount of runoff generated by a parcel of land in terms of “equivalent stormwater units” (ESUs). One ESU represents a typical developed residential parcel. Larger parcels or those with large amount of hard or impervious surfaces, such as parking lots or roofs, generate more runoff and are assessed more.
  - Capital Improvement Projects (CIPs) have been constructed in several drainage basins and reduce the flood threat.
  - Ongoing CIP projects were designed to help relieve chronic flooding in areas such as St. Armands and Catfish Creek.
- **What is the goal of Sarasota County Stormwater Utility?**
  - To construct projects that can handle 10 inches of rain in 24 hours. In 1992 and again in 1995, certain areas of the county experienced rainfalls in this amount. The overall goal is to have no structure flooding.
  - In our region, Sarasota County is among those with the highest standards. Most governments build to handle just 8 inches in 24 hours; Sarasota builds to handle the less frequent, 10 inches in 24 hours, event.
  - Stormwater in yards and ditches and some street flooding is to be expected – but not on evacuation routes.

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### What can residents do to help prevent flooding?

- Remember: storm drains are designed to remove rainwater from the streets and neighborhoods and allow it to flow into the creeks and bays. A good slogan to keep in mind is “Only rain down the drain.”
- Do not blow grass clippings into the street or storm drain because it blocks the flow.
- As needed, rake pine needles and other debris away from your street stormwater grate. This allows water to flow into the system as it was designed to do.
- Do not dispose of any trash in the stormwater canals. Maintenance crews have found televisions, tires, even a sofa blocking the flow of stormwater. Note that items such as basketballs and trashcan lids may be blown into canals and ditches during a storm. Please retrieve these items and discard or store them safely.

Sarasota County maintains ditches that are public. Contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 861-5000 and ask to speak to a stormwater inspector to determine if your ditch is private or public. If your public ditch is overgrown and unsightly, call 861-5000; maintenance crews will get there as soon as possible. Since vegetation doesn't necessarily hinder or stop stormwater flow, which may not necessarily happen right away.