



Stormwater 101

By: Matthew Lake, M.S. CPMSM - Executive Director

Every year, the Stormwater Utility office initiates projects to help control flooding issues in the town. We have completed several projects and are now constructing major projects including the Sunset Road drainage improvement project and the Independence Street drainage improvement project. Engineers are also working on plans for the Independence Hill 3rd Addition project, Meadowdale Detention Storage project and Bon Aire Lake Culvert to gain additional stormwater storage. The town also made numerous emergency repairs due to unanticipated infrastructure issues.



Controlling runoff from rain or snowmelt and minimizing pollutants is the primary goal of stormwater management. Stormwater is conveyed through above ground (ditches, swales, rivers etc.) and below ground (pipes) infrastructure. Above ground facilities include storage like detention basins and ponds that are designed to store and release stormwater at a controlled rate. The stormwater system is entirely separate from the sanitary system (managed by conservancy districts). As the town implements stormwater improvement projects to replace aging infrastructure and provide additional detention, homeowners can also enhance their property drainage with a few strategies below.

Here are a few things you can do to protect your home:

- “Adopt a Drain” near your home and remove any leaves, grass and debris from storm drains, culverts and ditches near your home.
- Remove grass clippings from the street and storm drains after mowing.
- Remove leaves from gutters and downspouts (repair/replace as needed) and extend gutters/downspouts several feet away from the foundation.
- Ensure sump pumps are working properly, are not blocked and discharge several feet into your yard; install a battery backup for sump pumps.
- Install a backwater valve to prevent sanitary sewage backups through floor drain (see photo to the right); call a plumber for more information.
- Ensure that the ground next to foundation slopes away from your home.
- Do not block grassed swales/drains with fencing, landscaping, sheds, etc.
- Check to see if a property is located in a flood zone before you buy or build.
- Report any illegal dumping and provide evidence (photos or video) to the Stormwater office at (219) 472-8668.



Installing a backwater valve prevents sanitary backups during heavy rain events.

If there is a water main break on your street, please contact your water company:

Indiana American Water - (219) 880-2330
Utilities, Inc. - (219) 226-1630

If you have a sanitary sewer issue, please contact your sanitary sewer company:

Merrillville Conservancy District - (219) 472-8000
Independence Hill Conservancy District - (219) 769-3996
Gary Sanitary District - (219) 944-1211 - Press “2” for flooding or sewer problems