Storm Sewer Pipe and Basin Ownership Frequently asked questions:

Who is responsible for the basin and the associated pipes?

The Association that owns the commons property the basin, storm sewer pipes, ditches and most smaller creeks are located on is the responsible party. If it is only one parcel of land with no association, that land owner is the responsible party for the basin. There are a few exceptions such as a county drain or a county creek.

Who owns the storm system in the road right of way?

Any storm structure that takes direct runoff from the public roadway is publicly owned. All other storm sewer pipes are owned by the benefiting property development.

Why does my association own the basin and not the City?

While other utilities were deeded over to the City upon the completion of the development, such as watermain, sanitary sewer and roadways, the storm sewer system was not. By default, this ownership then stays with the property as the developer transferred ownership to the association or property owner.

Why do my property taxes not pay for this?

There is no dedicated fund from the collected tax revenue for this type of operation and maintenance and this is not a public property or utility to maintain.

What if we do not have an active association?

While there may not be an active association at this time, there are still agreements in place that spell out the ownership of the basin as being that of the benefiting property owners. These records are filed with the Oakland County Records office and can be retrieved from them if you so choose to. Rochester Hills has some copies of these records but not all. Our record keeping was handled through the County when we were a Township and therefore we may not have records earlier than the 1980's.

How do I know if my storm sewer system is working properly?

The City of Rochester Hills can do a site walk with you to point out areas that typically need attention or may be something that should be addressed on a somewhat frequent basis. This usually includes looking at the sediment build up in a dry basin, the inlet and outlet pipes for obstructions, as well as looking into a few storm structures for debris and structural integrity. A larger more in depth inspection should be done by a consultant on your behalf. A list of potential consultants can be provided to you by the City Engineering Department.

How do I know where our system is and what type it is?

The City of Rochester Hills can discuss with you what type and where your system is located. We can also provide you with the construction plans for your review in our office. In most cases, it would be possible for copies to be made, some prints however are not able to be reproduced based on their condition.

What are the different types of basins?

Detention basin- stores waters for a given amount of time and releases at a controlled rate, trying to mimic the runoff rates from the area prior to development and the addition of all the impervious surfaces such as roofs driveways, concrete patios and roadways.

Retention basin- stores waters onsite until the calculated runoff volume is either absorbed into the soils or evaporates. These systems are typically much larger in size due to the longer time required to get back to a pre storm event dry state.

Underground basin- stores storm water runoff waters in a tank, oversized pipes, or other structures underground. These are most commonly used in areas that have tight site constraints such as a strip mall or office building. They are much less easy to inspect and service due to the access limitations.

Wet Basin- are basins that have standing waters year round. The actual basin storage capacity is above this normal water elevation.

Dry Basin- is a basin that can be mowed or left in a natural state. The general condition is that the soils dry out after the basin dewaters from a rain event. There are some dry basins that have a low flow in a center channel, but are still called a dry basin, as they dewater and do not have open standing water during non storm events.

Can our association use the waters in the basin?

Yes, many associations use the waters in the ponds for irrigation of the same commons areas. The waters are not potable but are safe for irrigation of lawns, open spaces and non vegetable gardens.

Does our wet basin need a fountain for the health of the pond?

While a fountain, bubbler or aerator does contribute to oxygenation and reduce stratification, is there any other reasons why your basin is not "healthy"? Some basins have a high algae bloom in the spring. This is due to a high input of phosphorus, most of which comes from lawn fertilization runoff. The high algae bloom will compete with the other plants, macroinvertebrates and some fish for the oxygen. The results can be less desirable fish populations, more mosquitoes and the smell of decaying algae when spring turns into summer. A better way to help the pond is to use no phosphorus fertilizers, use fertilizers only where and when needed and to keep the granules on the lawn. Not all lawns require a four step program. This will should help save you and your association money in the long run while still achieving a healthy lawn and pond at the same time.