



Why should I support the utility?

- A stormwater utility will allow the Town to increase its efforts on stormwater management. The utility will allow a **more comprehensive approach**, require that all properties in Town contribute to stormwater costs, and **increase the Town’s ability to receive state and federal funding** to help manage stormwater. The Town’s stormwater system is also highly regulated by the U.S. EPA and the State of Vermont. In many instances, addressing stormwater pollution **is a requirement under state and federal permits**.
- It will allow the preservation, protection, and improved management of water resources into the future. **Our lake and many of our streams are currently polluted by stormwater and our efforts to improve and preserve these natural resources must be increased.**
- It will address **inadequate and failing stormwater systems**. Our stormwater systems are aging and require major repair or replacement. Many areas of Town have **no stormwater systems at all**.
- It will provide a **more adequate and equitable plan for stormwater management**. Currently property taxes fund stormwater programs, and properties that are exempt from property taxes do not contribute toward the Town’s stormwater costs. A utility will require **all properties to help pay for clean water**. Single family residential properties with an assessed value of \$275,000 would pay about the same or slightly less under the utility structure for a significantly improved stormwater program.

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STORMWATER UTILITY PROGRAM INFORMATION



Did you know the Town is considering a Stormwater Utility?

The Town of Colchester is proposing a stormwater utility that would become effective July 1, 2017. Water quality has been the focus for many years in Colchester, which was the reason the Integrated Water Resources Management Plan was pursued in 2009.

This plan was the first of its kind in Vermont, and looked at how stormwater and wastewater are managed in Colchester while providing recommendations on how to improve protection of our water resources. The project lasted four years, included over 16 public meetings, and recommended the Town create a utility as a more equitable way to fund stormwater projects and maintenance. As a result, the Stormwater Advisory Committee was created in 2014 as a group of businesses, residents, and institutions to investigate whether a utility was right for Colchester. The Select Board will be considering the recommendation during the Spring of 2017—please see the rest of the brochure for utility information and see the “More Information” section for links to project documents and key meeting dates.

What is a stormwater utility?

It is very similar to a water or sewer utility. The utility takes care of the community's stormwater system, and charges all properties a user fee based upon the amount of stormwater they create. The amount of stormwater created is based on how much impervious surface there is on a property.

What is stormwater, and why is it a problem?

Stormwater is rain that cannot be absorbed into the ground because of driveways, buildings, parking lots and other hard surfaces. When stormwater runs off the land, it picks up and carries pollutants into our lake and streams.



Will I be eligible for credits?

Credits for stormwater management practices are available to directly assessed properties (large residential and commercial developments). There are credits available for:

- Water Quantity Reduction
- Water Quality Treatment
- Green Infrastructure Practices
- MS4 Permitted Facilities
- Water Education Curriculum (Schools Only)

How will my fee be calculated?

The fee will be based upon the amount of impervious surface on each property. A flat fee will be used for single family homes, duplexes, and triplexes with less than 1 acre of impervious. All other properties will be directly assessed and their fees will be based on the actual area of impervious surface. All property owners will pay at least a minimum fee even if there is no impervious surface. Protecting the community's water resources is a Town wide issue, and everyone's help is needed.



By the numbers....

Colchester is home to 2282 stormwater pipelines, 53 stormwater ponds, 279 stormwater outfalls, and we enjoy 27 miles of coastline along Lake Champlain (more than any other community in Vermont).

There are over 2,000 utilities across the United States, and there are three other stormwater utilities in Vermont: Burlington (2009), South Burlington (2010), and Williston (2015).

What will the fees be used for?

The primary focus of the utility will be to reduce the amount of phosphorus and sediment going into our lake and streams. Specific projects include:

- A stormwater management system for Malletts Bay and its upland watersheds including Crooked Creek, Smith Creek and Shore Acres.
- Stormwater improvements in the Sunderland Brook Watershed and Morehouse Brook watershed which are both polluted by stormwater.
- Improvements to the Town's thirteen miles of gravel roads which contribute significant amounts of sediment into our lake and streams.
- A detailed condition assessment of the Town's current stormwater systems to assess their adequacy and need for repair or replacement.
- Ensuring ongoing community compliance to state and federal stormwater permits.

Contacts & More Information

Select Board Info Meeting #1: March 14
Select Board Info Meeting #2: March 28
Select Board Public Hearing & Vote: April 25

A searchable database and other program documents will be available starting March 15 at:
<http://colchestervt.gov/213/Managing-Stormwater>

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