



BALDWIN COUNTY STORMWATER COOPERATIVE

WHAT IS THE BALDWIN COUNTY STORMWATER COOPERATIVE?

The BCSC has at its core the idea of managing and protecting the area's surface water resources on a watershed scale. It is in the planning stages at this time. Baldwin County cities and the County met four times to discuss all aspects of the idea and agreed that a separate legally constituted public corporation was the best way to meet the needs of the County's citizens. The BCSC, if approved, will be a voluntary association of Baldwin County's local governments to:

support local communities in managing flooding, drainage, and water quality problems related to urban stormwater runoff in Baldwin County.



Mobile Bay after a storm

WHY DO WE NEED THE BCSC?

Baldwin County is facing unprecedented pressures on its surface water resources. These pressures can have the effect of reducing aesthetics and County property values. These pressures include:

- ◆ *rapid urban development which greatly increases flooding, increases channel erosion, and causes habitat destruction;*
- ◆ *aging drainage infrastructure (culverts, ditches, pipes, inlets, etc.) that is not being fully maintained; and*
- ◆ *deteriorating water quality in streams and the bay due to increasing pollution and sediment runoff*

HOW WILL IT BE STRUCTURED AND WHAT WILL IT DO?

Each city who wishes, and the County, will be represented on the governing board. The board will make all decisions. The BCSC will both perform key services County-wide and will, optionally, assist local governments who desire in managing their own local stormwater programs. The key services will include:



Sediment laden stormwater

- ◆ ***Watershed and Stream Stewardship*** – monitoring and inspection, master planning, data collection, assistance to local governments in development planning, coordination and funding of regional projects.
- ◆ ***Development of Standards and Criteria*** – creation of sound and effective stormwater standards, research and education on new design and development concepts, education and training.
- ◆ ***Regulatory Compliance Coordination*** – coordination and assistance in water quality compliance, working with non-profit groups, public education, FEMA program assistance.
- ◆ ***Stream System Management*** – master plans of streams, flood control and stream stabilization capital construction projects, inspections, maintenance.
- ◆ ***Local Stormwater Program Service Partnership*** – assistance, on request, in management of a local government's stormwater program and funding.



WHAT WILL THIS COST AND HOW WILL IT BE FUNDED?

The County-wide core program is expected to cost in the range of \$2 to \$3 million dollars annually. Of this total, fully two-thirds goes directly to capital construction – fixing problems. The rest is for planning, monitoring, education, and service to local governments.

The needed revenue will be generated based on how much runoff a developed parcel of land has. Stormwater runoff is directly related to the amount of land on a parcel that does not soak up rain - rooftops, parking lots, etc. It only makes sense that:

“the more you pave the more you pay.”

That is understandable and fair. It is like using water – the more you use the more you must pay.

In the same way, a small stormwater user fee will be charged to each developed parcel of land within a participating community. The actual charge depends on the final participation list and the program costs but is expected to be less than \$3.00 per month per household for the core program. Properties with more developed area will pay correspondingly more in a fee. There will also be credits against the fee for such things as well maintained detention ponds or water quality treatment practices.

There are many such user-fee based organizations across the United States, over 700, and more every day. This is because such arrangements have a great track record of success and often are strongly supported by local residents when they understand the need.



Failing sediment protection



Flooding of older developments



Flooding at development site

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Each local community is part of the process. You should contact your local community engineer or public works personnel for more information. Or you can contact the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program at (251) 431-6409. We are in the planning stages, and hope to gain local and state legislative support for this effort on behalf of all Baldwin County citizens.

