

Is Stormwater Damaging My Property?

Have you ever wondered why your basement keeps flooding or your driveway is washing away? Whether you are a homeowner, an agricultural producer, or a government agency you can be affected by stormwater.

Structural damage is one of the common types of property damage caused by stormwater. Flooded basements and leaking roofs are often expensive problems after a heavy storm. Stormwater can also cause cracks to occur in foundations and water damage around windows and doors. Stormwater can also affect public and private utilities. Private water wells can be impacted from surface water contamination. On-lot septic systems can be damaged from standing surface water or flooding. Utility poles can become unstable from streambank erosion or wet soil conditions. The responsibility often falls on the property owner to replace unstable utility poles and repair private septic systems and drinking water sources.

Soil erosion of lawns, agricultural fields, streambanks, and driveways can cause actual loss of property. Flooding can lead to saturated areas on lawns and fields. These wet soil conditions can make lawns difficult to maintain, lawn and farm equipment can become stuck, and mud can be tracked inside from pets and children. Other property damages from stormwater can include field and crop damage. These types of property damage have the potential to cause property values to decrease.

Scoured bridge abutments and deposition upstream and downstream of bridges from high stream flows can cause significant damage and an increase in maintenance costs for landowners. Drainage ditches can quickly fill up with sediment and other debris from concentrated stormwater discharges. Washed out roads, berms, and culverts are also common issues after storm events. Residential driveways are also frequently eroded and washed out from stormwater runoff. Flooded roads and driveways may become dangerous unexpectedly during storms due to water ponding on a road or driveway and also from ice forming after snowmelt and winter rain storms.

In summary, stormwater can be the cause of many types of property damage. Everyone has a role to play managing stormwater in order to minimize and prevent damage and save time and money on expensive stormwater damage repairs. Learning more about what can be done to manage stormwater on your property can help reduce the damage you may have to deal with.

If you have additional questions about stormwater, or you are just interested in learning more, you can find a full series of videos and articles in the **Penn State Extension Stormwater Basics series** at <https://extension.psu.edu/water/stormwater-management>.

West Earl Township also offers resources for learning more about stormwater at www.westearltp.org/pages/stormwater_education.html