

SOAK UP THE RAIN



Hurricane Ida

It has been three weeks since Hurricane Ida dumped as much as 8.7 inches of rain in Highland Park, causing catastrophic flooding, infrastructure failure, and disruption to our Highland Park community.

Ida was a wake-up call to improve our approach to stormwater management as a way to protect ourselves and our homes from flooding and climate change.

What is stormwater? What causes flooding? And how can you get involved in actions to create a safer community for all?

What is stormwater and why does it matter?

STORMWATER is any water collecting on the ground that has fallen from the sky as rain, snow, or ice. Stormwater can eventually soak into the soil, be stored on land, evaporate, or flood into streams and rivers.

When the land was still undisturbed by human activities, abundant vegetation kept the soil soft and **most rainfall soaked directly into the ground where it fell**. Low spots held ponds or marshes in which heavy rain accumulated.

Streams were fed gradually by water filtering through the ground. **Stream ecosystems ran clear and supported an abundance of life.**

But now, almost half the ground in the Borough is covered by buildings and pavements. Hard surfaces like roofs, roads, and parking lots, as well as lawns and places with heavy foot traffic, block water from soaking into the soil. If the water cannot absorb into the ground where will it go?

How you can be a stormwater superhero!

To save our waterways from pollution, protect ourselves from flooding, and restore groundwater, it is essential that we rethink water flow in our towns.

The rainwater that isn't absorbed flows rapidly onto streets, collecting on roads, searching for an outlet. Storm drains carry the stormwater runoff along with trash, fertilizers, oil, bacteria, and other pollutants that are picked up along the way. The debris and runoff from storm sewers flows into streams, into the Raritan River, and then to the Atlantic Ocean.

We all play a role in managing stormwater before it becomes runoff, causing flooding and carrying debris and pollution.

Homeowners can disconnect downspouts and plant trees. Businesses can minimize hardtop and pavement. And everyone can make sure to not litter and keep trash out of our waterways.

See the Boro's new stormwater management webpage for more strategies and resources. Together we can restore a cycle of natural wellness in Highland Park!

Stormwater Word of the Month: Impervious Surfaces

Impervious Surfaces are pavements, buildings, and water-resistant surfaces of all kinds that block water from absorbing into natural ground

Materials prepared by The Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership.

For more information on stormwater management, and to get involved with regional environmental stewardship visit: lowerraritanwatershed.org

Upcoming Events

Highland Park Clean Up
September 26, 2021

Stormwater Education
Workshop
October 7, 2021

Share your photos of good stormwater management on Instagram!

@lowerraritanwatershed
#stormwater



To learn more visit our new webpage!
<https://www.hpboro.com/departments/water-sewer/stormwater-management>

Thanks to Mill Brook Streamkeeper Susan Edmunds for Photos and Text

Photo Descriptions:

Picture 1: Flooding in Mill Brook between Grant Avenue and Lincoln Avenue; ground flooded by white flowing water in an area surrounded by trees

Picture 2: Example of downspouts and appropriate storm water management; side of a house with white pipe leading stormwater off of the roof