

## A STORMWATER PRIMER

The Village of Menands has been designated a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) community for the past several years. The Village has also been a member of the Stormwater Coalition of Albany County since 2008. The Coalition is comprised of eleven municipal members and the University at Albany and helps support the program at the local level. In order to help educate the public about the permit requirements of the MS4 program, we will be posting periodic articles on stormwater management. These articles will discuss stormwater issues that will help inform and benefit our residents and business owners. In this way, we will provide information about stormwater and its effect on the environment and what the Village is doing to develop an effective stormwater management program.

### **What is Stormwater?**

Stormwater is water from rain or melting snow that doesn't soak into the ground but runs off into waterways. It flows from rooftops, over impervious surfaces such as driveways and roadways, bare soil, and through sloped lawns picking up a variety of contaminants on its way. As it flows, stormwater runoff collects and transports soil, animal waste, salt, pesticides, fertilizers, oil and grease, debris and other potential pollutants.

After these contaminants are carried away by stormwater runoff, which is essentially untreated water, they are discharged into the bodies of water that we use for fishing, swimming and drinking water.

### **Why Should I Care?**

Polluted stormwater can contribute to a number of significant water quality concerns including a buildup of an excessive amount of nutrients in the water supply and the development of bacteria and other pathogens.

### **What Can Be Done?**

In 2003, Congress amended the Federal Clean Water Act to include stormwater discharges from construction sites disturbing more than one acre of land and discharges from publicly owned stormwater conveyance systems in urbanized areas as a regulated activity. Such discharges are unlawful unless authorized through the State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit program which is administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

The Village of Menands is an operator of a municipal separated storm sewer system (MS4) and therefore must comply with the appropriate Federal and State regulations dealing with stormwater. The eleven MS4 communities in Albany County agreed to form the Stormwater Coalition of Albany County via an intermunicipal agreement to pool resources so that Coalition members can adequately implement MS4 permit requirements. The coalition is governed by a Board of Directors whose members are appointed by each municipal government.

The establishment of the Coalition has enabled the Village to meet its obligations under the MS4 Program in an economical and efficient manner. The Coalition provides technical assistance, field surveys of outfalls, and coordination of the Joint Annual Report to NYSDEC. More information is available at the Coalition website which can be accessed at [www.stormwateralbanycounty.org](http://www.stormwateralbanycounty.org). The 2019 Annual Report is available on the Coalition website as well.