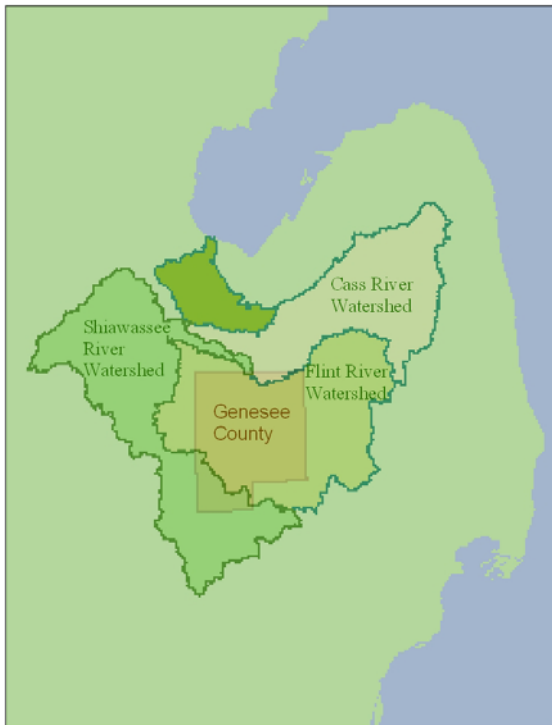


Water Facts

Much of Genesee County's surface water drains through stormdrains (road catch basins, underground pipes and open ditches), which empty into Creeks, Streams and Rivers. A watershed is any area of land that drains to a common point. That common point can be a lake, a river or an arbitrary point within the river system.

Within Genesee County, the rain that falls either ends up in the Flint River, Shiawassee River or the Cass River. These rivers flow out of Genesee County and eventually come together along with the Tittabawassee to become the Saginaw River before flowing into the Great Lakes; specifically Lake Huron.



Dear Genesee County Property Owner,

This brochure offers a basic explanation of the Drain Special Assessment process that pays for maintaining the storm drain systems in Genesee County under my jurisdiction.

A properly maintained drainage system is important to county residents and businesses for everything from crop production to keeping streets passable and minimizing flood damage. A routinely maintained system is more cost effective, avoiding the need for large, expensive drain projects often required to rebuild a system that has been neglected for years.

The Drain Special Assessment process begins with the Day of Review of Apportionments in which you as a property owner are invited to review the records of maintenance efforts and costs for providing your land with storm drainage, and to discuss your proposed share of those costs. This Day of Review also provides the opportunity for you to inform my staff and I of additional maintenance issues, helping us do a better job for you in the future.

If, after reading this brochure, you still have questions about Drain Special Assessments, please do not hesitate to contact my staff or me. The Genesee County Drain Office hours are 8:00 am to noon & 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm, Mon - Fri.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Wright,
Genesee County Drain Commissioner

Ten Frequently Asked Questions About Drain Special Assessments



Jeffrey Wright

Genesee County Drain Commissioner
Division of Surface Water Management

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1. What is a Drain Special Assessment?

County drainage districts are separate public corporations with their own financial records. Each drainage district is supported by a Drain Special Assessment that covers the cost of constructing & maintaining the drainage system. County drains are not maintained by Genesee general fund taxes.

2. What is a Drainage District?

A drainage district is a legally established area of land that drains to a common outlet. Drainage district boundaries are determined by natural topography of the land and rarely correspond to political boundaries such as Townships or Counties. Common words for drainage district include watershed and drainage basin or area.

3. Where is The Storm Drain For Which I Am Being Assessed?

The Genesee County Drain Office has maps that can show the location of your property and the county drains within the drainage district. These documents will be available on the Day of Review. Even if your property does not touch the County Drain, storm water flows toward this County Drain as an outlet regardless of the land's elevation.

4. Why Did I Receive More Than One Special Assessment Notice?

Each notice informs you of a Drain Special Assessment for a different drainage district. Your property can be in multiple drainage districts because stormwater moves from smaller watersheds through larger watersheds, ultimately discharging to the Great lakes. For example, if your property were located in a small watershed that is "nested" inside a larger watershed, you would receive an assessment for each district, should they both be assessed in the same year.



5. Is This The Only Way I Would Receive Multiple Drain Assessments In One Year?

No. Water may flow off your property in more than one direction into different drains and drainage districts. All of those drains may be assessed in one year.



6. How Are Assessments Determined?

The law requires that assessments be based on benefit derived as determined by the Drain Commissioner. All properties within the drainage district are assessed based on size of the parcel and the land use that is assigned by the municipality. Distances from the drain or the location of the property within the drainage district are not factors. Drainage is considered as an interdependent system with the entire system benefiting from maintenance of the common outlet.

7. Do All Property Owners Pay Drain Assessments?

All property owners within a drainage district receive an assessment, unless specifically exempted by law. In addition, the Municipality, Genesee County, and the Michigan Department of Transportation (as appropriate) also receive an assessment for a portion of the maintenance costs. The Drain Code does not exempt most non-profit or religious properties from assessment.

8. I Recently Purchased my Property, Why Am I Being Billed For Work Done Prior To My Ownership?

Although the work for which you are being assessed may have been completed prior to your purchase of the land, the Drain Code requires that assessments be levied to the property, and assessed to the current owner of record. In most cases, the work performed will benefit the property for years to come.

9. What If I Cannot Attend The Day Of Review?

If you are unable to attend the Day of Review, and have questions regarding your assessment or the assessment process, please call the Genesee County Drain Office; 810-732-1590. It is possible to make an appoint at times other than the Day Of Review, although the appeal period begins after the date of the Day of Review.

10. What Happens If I Disagree With the Proposed Assessment For My Property?

Appeal of Drain Special Assessments may be made to the Genesee County Probate Court within 10 days after the Day of Review.