

# What a stormwater ordinance means

A stormwater ordinance is actually a water quality ordinance. Uncontrolled drainage and runoff that is associated with land disturbance and development has a significant impact on the health of our lakes. It is called Non-Point Source pollution because it does not come from a specific source but can come from the entire watershed and therefore is non-point. Stormwater carries pollutants and degrades water quality. It also carries unwanted nutrients, which accelerates the eutrophication or cloudiness of the lakes. Construction that requires land clearing and alteration of the natural topography tends to increase erosion and sedimentation. Economic losses and maintenance costs can result from these adverse impacts on the waters in the village and the town. But many of these problems can be avoided if sound stormwater practices are in effect.

A stormwater ordinance establishes criteria for projects that would have an impact on our water bodies. The ordinance has become part of the Joint Land Use Code and is a tool for the Code Enforcement Officer and the Joint Review Board to use in evaluating project applications. It classifies projects as exempt, minor or major. A minor project would be a land disturbance of 5,000- 15,000 square feet or an impervious surface of over 1,000 sq. ft. For

these types of projects a permit would be required as part of the building permit and the landowner would use a simple guide to show how the runoff would be controlled on the project site. For a major project, which is a land disturbance over 15,000 square feet, a permit

would also be required and a civil engineer would be required to do a Stormwater Management Plan. These large projects would most likely be part of a Site plan application before the Joint Review Board. An exempt project is a land

disturbance under 5,000 square feet. A permit would also be required for new impervious surfaces over 1,000 square feet. Impervious surfaces are black-top, macadam, and roofs which increase the runoff from a site and must be controlled on the site.

The village and town boards have adopted such an ordinance. Other municipalities have also realized the value of such a preventative measure. We would like to ensure that our water quality remains at the high level that we enjoy today. Remember the First Flush? Check one out at the next rain event and you will support a water quality/stormwater ordinance.

The Lake Placid/ North Elba Water Management Committee will meet at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 12 at the Peacock Park Beach House. Your participation is encouraged.

## Guest Column

LP/NE Water Management Committee