

Groundwater vs Stormwater

When it rains, the water from that rain event can go two places. Some of the rain will fall on hard surfaces such as streets, parking lots, and buildings; and then runs off of these areas flowing into storm drains and ending up in our local rivers, lakes and streams. We call this water stormwater. However, some of the water will soak into the ground, watering our trees, plants, and grass. This water is groundwater, and it is very different from stormwater.

Groundwater is part of the water cycle and is pulled by gravity into the soil. As this water filters through the layers of soil, it occupies space between rocks and subsurface material. Groundwater moves through the soil continuously, however, the speed at which it moves can depend on the soil and rock around it, and how saturated the soil is already.

There are times when our soil can become so saturated that the groundwater cannot move through the soil quickly enough. This can happen when we have experienced several weeks of rainfall, and the water has not had time to filter through the soil. This can cause ponding and look very similar to flooding.

What can be done? Unfortunately, usually the only thing to do in these situations is to wait for gravity to do its job. Eventually, the water will soak into the ground where it will continue on its journey, either soaking deeper into the ground or moving across the water table to the closest surface water body.

If you are experiencing standing water on your property, be patient while it recedes.

If you are experiencing flooding from runoff from the City's storm drainage system, please call our Stormwater Hotline at 910-433-1613.

Visit us on the web to learn more about the City's stormwater program at

www.fayettevillenc.gov/stormwater.

