

Phone: 865.522.7007
Fax: 865.329.2422
Email: info@tcwn.org
www.tcwn.org



P.O. Box 1521
Knoxville, TN 37901
706 Walnut St., Ste. 200
Knoxville, TN 37902

Knox County Spends \$1.9M+ on Deficient Stormwater Ordinance

Taxpayer dollars wasted while property owners suffer damage from overdevelopment

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
August 24, 2006

Contact: Renee Hoyos, TCWN Executive Director
865.522.7007 (o)
865.607.6618 (c)

(Knoxville, TN) The Tennessee Clean Water Network discovered Knox County spent \$1.9 million on a stormwater program and ordinance that does not comply with state and federal clean water laws. The discovery came after Tennessee Clean Water Network filed a TN Open Records Act request to review all invoices pertaining to the development of the new stormwater ordinance.

“Every single resident is paying for Knox County’s non-compliance with state and federal clean water laws.” Stated Renee Hoyos, TCWN Executive Director. “Private property is either damaged by stormwater runoff from over development or our tax dollars are paying \$1.9M for an ordinance that does not meet state and federal clean water laws.”

Knox County paid \$1.9M to AMEC, a consulting firm, to put the County in compliance with the state of Tennessee’s Municipal Storm Sewer System (MS4) phase II water pollution permit program (*part of the permit includes developing a new stormwater ordinance*). AMEC failed to do so.

Tennessee Clean Water Network technical and legal experts, photo evidence from residents of Knox County and TN Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) all found that Knox County disregards clean water laws and jeopardizes resident’s right to clean water.

“Non-compliance with state and federal clean water laws adds a tremendous financial burden on Mayor Ragsdale’s constituents.” Added Hoyos.

“Knox Countians are investing personal resources into fighting to protect our property and water in the absence of County leadership to protect us from overdevelopment.” Said Darrell Acuff a farmer in Northeast Knox County who personally invested in holding Knox County accountable to its drainage requirements.

To solve Knox County’s flooding, runoff and property damage from over development Mayor Ragsdale and his staff need to have the will to comply with the requirements specifically spelled out in its state water pollution permit and enforce clean water laws.

Knox County rewarded AMEC for their failed performance by approving another 18 month contract to evaluate Knox County's stormwater program, instead of seeking other firms or consulting the web to see if template ordinances exist that could be tailored for Knox County.

Despite paying AMEC \$1.9 to put Knox County in compliance with the requirements of Tennessee's Municipal Storm Sewer System (MS4) phase II water pollution permit program, TCWN and TDEC pointed out several deadlines Knox County missed, including:

1. Not having a working ordinance to identify and prohibit illicit discharges by Dec. 18, 2003.
2. Not having a working construction site ordinance within 18 months of permit coverage (their permit was issued October 2, 2003). 18 months was April 2, 2005.
3. Not having a working construction site program by December 31, 2005.
4. In effect, Knox County needs a current drainage map to do all of the above but, they don't have one.

In the absence of these deliverables, Knox County residents continued to be burdened with unbelievable amounts of muddy water leaving construction sites, damaging private property and polluting the waters of the state.

For photo evidence of Knox County not complying with the Clean Water Act including: muddy water leaving construction sites, flooding private property and polluting our waters contact Cortney@tcwn.org

The Tennessee Clean Water Network is the only statewide organization solely dedicated to protecting our clean water and organizing Tennesseans to protect the waters we live with and love.

Knox County Clean Water Alliance is a citizens group working to ensure the County adopts and enforces a protective stormwater ordinance that will protect their property from flooding and creeks from water pollution. Visit www.kccwa.org for more information.

For more information, including a copy of Knox County's Compliance Investigation letter, response, pictures of stormwater damage and water pollution from over development in Knox County and background documents call 865.522.7007 ext 1 or 865.789.2669

###