

# Clean Water Begins With You

## What is Stormwater Runoff?



Stormwater runoff is precipitation from rain or snowmelt that flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces such as streets, sidewalks, and driveways prevent stormwater from soaking into the ground. As stormwater flows over ground, it can pick up chemicals, debris, dirt, and other pollutants that enter the storm sewer system.

## Why is Stormwater Runoff a Concern?

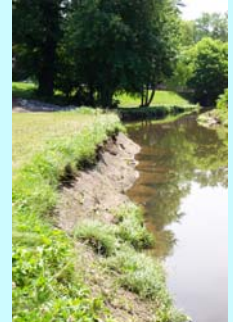


Once pollutants from stormwater enter the storm sewer system, they are discharged **UNTREATED** into local streams and waterways. These are the same bodies of water that we use for drinking, fishing, and recreation.

## What are the effects of Stormwater?

Polluted stormwater can lead to an overall decline in stream health that results in a negative impact to fish, wildlife, and recreation.

- ◆ Increased volumes of stormwater entering streams due to impervious surfaces, preventing infiltration and increasing runoff, can lead to erosion of stream and lake banks. This in turn results in large amounts of sediments entering our waterways. Higher volumes of water entering our waterbodies also leads to flooding.
- ◆ Sediments cloud water, making it difficult for aquatic plants and animals to survive.
- ◆ Excess nutrients, often a result of fertilizer runoff from our lawns, causes algal blooms. When algae die and decompose, the process removes oxygen from the water. Fish and aquatic organisms cannot live in water with low oxygen levels.
- ◆ Bacteria, often from dog waste left on the ground, can wash into local streams and create a health hazard.
- ◆ Debris and trash that is left on streets, sidewalks and parking lots is washed into our waterbodies degrading them aesthetically and harming wildlife that use the water as a home.
- ◆ Pollution from stormwater degrades streams and waterways used for drinking water. This can affect public health and lead to increased costs to treat the water.



## What you can do to be part of the solution

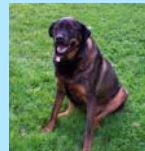
### Storm Drains

Never dump anything down a storm drain especially used motor oil or antifreeze. Dispose of these properly at a local service station or approved recycling center. Encourage your community to stencil storm drains with "No Dumping, Drains to Creek" so others will know that everything that enters the storm sewer system also enters their local creeks.



### Pet Waste

Pet waste can be a major source of excess nutrients and bacteria to local waterbodies. It is important to always pick up after your pet and dispose of the waste properly. When pet waste is left on the ground it increases public health risks.



### Auto Care

Washing your car at home on the driveway or the street can send detergents and other contaminants through the storm sewer system. It is best to wash your car at a commercial car wash where they treat and recycle the wastewater. If you do wash your car at home, do so in your yard so the water infiltrates into the ground.



Repair all car leaks. Fluid leaking from a car onto a paved surface is washed into the storm sewer system when it rains.

### Streambank Landscaping

Erosion of streambanks can be prevented through the use of vegetated strips along the banks. Also known as riparian buffers, these strips of tall grasses, trees, and flowers act to stabilize banks, which prevents erosion and additional sediment load in the stream.



### Residential Landscaping

Downspouts – Direct all downspouts away from pervious surfaces and onto lawns. Rain barrels can be used to collect the rainwater from downspouts. This water can be used later on the lawn and garden.

Lawn Care – Fertilizers and Pesticides should be used sparingly. When applied in excess, these chemicals are washed off by rainwater and enter the local storm sewer system. Additionally, it is important not to sweep yard waste and leaves into the street. These add extra nutrients to streams.

Rain Gardens or Grassy Swales – These specially designed gardens can be planted with native vegetation to provide an area for rainwater to collect and soak into the ground. Stormwater from rooftop drains and pavement areas can be directed to these vegetated areas.

