

Tips

- * Participate in cleanup activities in your neighborhood.
- * Write or call your elected representatives to inform them about your concerns and encourage legislation to protect water resources.
- * Get involved in local planning and zoning decisions and encourage your local officials to develop erosion and sediment control ordinances.
- * Keep storm gutters and drains clean of leaves and yard trimmings. (Decomposing vegetative matter leaches nutrients and can clog storm systems and result in flooding.)
- * Clean up after your pets. Pet waste contains nutrients and pathogens that can contaminate surface water.
- * Recycle used oil and antifreeze by taking them to service stations and other recycling centers. Never put used oil or other chemicals down storm drains or in drainage ditches. (One quart of oil can contaminate up to two million gallons of drinking water!)



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After the snow melts or it rains...



It looks fresh and clean outside. So, what happened to all the salt, trash, and debris?

I know, it went down the drain!



What is Stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation from rain or snowmelt flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent stormwater from naturally soaking into the ground.

Is runoff a problem?

Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants and flow into storm drains and culverts or directly to a lake, stream, river or wetland.



Anything that enters a storm water system is discharged untreated into the water bodies we use for swimming, fishing, and providing drinking water.

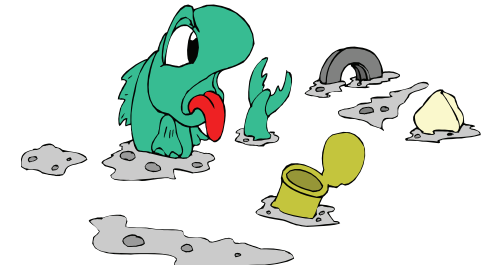
Polluted stormwater runoff can have many adverse effects on plants, fish, animals, and people.

Sediment can cloud the water and make it difficult or impossible for aquatic plants to grow. Sediment also can destroy aquatic habitats.



Excess nutrients can cause algae blooms. When algae die, they sink to the bottom and decompose in a process that removes oxygen from the water. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't exist in water with low dissolved oxygen levels.

Bacteria and other pathogens can wash into swimming areas and create health hazards, often making beach closures necessary.



Debris—plastic bags, six-pack rings, bottles, and cigarette butts—washed into water bodies can choke, suffocate, or disable aquatic life like ducks, fish, turtles, and birds.

Household hazardous wastes like insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil, and other auto fluids can poison aquatic life.

Land animals and people can become sick or die from eating diseased fish and shellfish or ingesting polluted water.

Polluted stormwater often affects drinking water sources. This, in turn, can affect human health and increase drinking water treatment costs.

What can we do to help?

Please don't pollute the storm drains! Here's a few things each person can do ...