



what is stormwater?

Stormwater is rain or melting snow. Stormwater washes pollutants into storm drains and directly into lakes, rivers and the ocean.

So what can you do to protect your water?

What is stormwater pollution?

Whether you call it stormwater pollution, polluted runoff, people pollution, watershed pollution or nonpoint source pollution, it all boils down to the same problem:

As stormwater travels across lawns, parking lots, gardens, roofs, and roadways, it picks up trash (such as candy wrappers, cigarette butts and cups) and other less visible pollutants (such as gasoline, motor oil, antifreeze, fertilizers, pesticides and pet waste). This polluted runoff flows directly into storm drains, rivers, lakes, streams and the ocean. Once polluted runoff reaches the water, it can contaminate drinking water supplies, kill fish and other wildlife, and force the closing of bathing beaches because of health threats to swimmers.

Human activity is largely responsible for the stormwater pollution. Everything that we put on the ground or into the storm drain can end up in our water. Each of us has a responsibility to make sure these contaminants stay out of our water. Whether we have clean water is up to you.

But there is good news - you have the power to stop your contribution to stormwater pollution and keep your environment clean. Simple changes can make a tremendous difference. Here are just a few ways you can help:

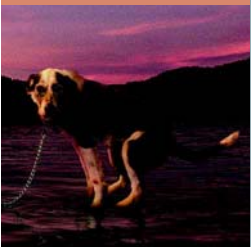
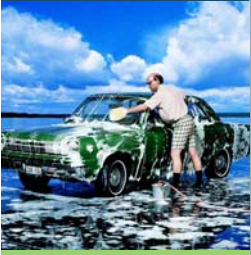
Place litter in trash cans. Place litter, including cigarette butts and fast food containers, in trash receptacles. Never throw litter in streets or down storm drains. Recycle as much as possible.

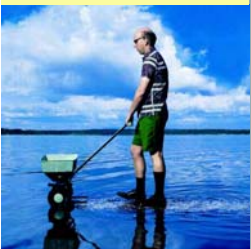
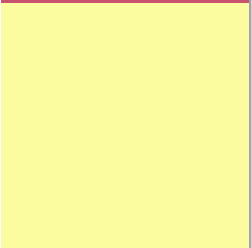
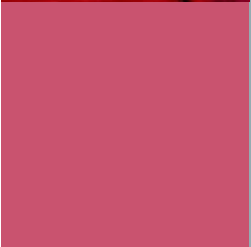
Use less fertilizer. Do a soil test to see if fertilizers are necessary. Fertilizers contain nutrients that, in abundance, cause blooms of algae that can lead to fish kills. Avoid the overuse of fertilizers and do not apply them before a heavy rainfall.

Use alternatives to pesticides whenever possible. If you do use a pesticide, follow the label directions carefully. Many household products made to exterminate pests are also toxic to humans, animals, aquatic organisms and plants.

Pick up after your pet and dispose of waste in the garbage or toilet, not the storm drain. Animal wastes contain bacteria and viruses that can contaminate shellfish and cause the closing of bathing beaches. Animal waste also contains nutrients that can cause unsightly algae blooms that can lead to fish kills.

Do not feed ducks and geese. Feeding ducks, geese and other waterfowl causes them to concentrate in small areas resulting in concentrated animal waste, causing the same problems as pet waste.





Dispose of household hazardous waste properly. Do not pour household hazardous products down any drain or toilet. Do not discard with the regular household trash. Use natural and less toxic alternatives whenever possible. Contact your County Solid Waste Management Office for information regarding household hazardous waste collection in your area. Many common household products (paint thinners, mothballs, drain and oven cleaners, to name a few) contain toxic ingredients. When improperly used or discarded, these products are a threat to public health and the environment.

Recycle all used motor oil. Do not dump used motor oil down storm drains or on the ground. Take used motor oil to a local public or private recycling center. Used motor oil contains toxic chemicals that are harmful to animals, humans and fish.

Wash your car only when necessary. Consider using a commercial car wash. Like fertilizers, many car detergents contain phosphate. If you wash your car at home, use a non-phosphate detergent and do it on your lawn.

Treat your septic system with respect. Avoid adding unnecessary grease, household hazardous products and solids to your septic system. Conserve water. Inspect your tank annually and pump it out every three to five years depending on its use. An improperly working septic system can contaminate ground water and create public health problems.

Use marine sanitation devices and pump-out facilities when boating. Observe no discharge zones. Dumping boat sewage overboard introduces bacteria and viruses into the water.

Your everyday activities can affect your water. You can help reduce the amount of pollution in our water. Just being concerned about the environment is not enough; now you can help improve it!