

Stormwater

Q. What is Stormwater runoff?

A. The flow of water that results from precipitation and which occurs immediately following rainfall or as a result of snowmelt that is not absorbed in the ground. This runoff usually flows into the nearest stream, creek, river, lake or ocean. The runoff is not treated in any way, unless it passes through a natural filtering system such as vegetation, ponds, or wetlands.

Q. Did you know that not all substances that enter storm drain inlets in the streets can be removed by a treatment process before entering streams, creeks, rivers, lakes, or oceans?

A. Those substances that enter the storm drain system are not treated at all! Anything poured into a gutter or a storm drain, such as used motor oil or antifreeze, may flow directly to creeks, streams or rivers.

Q. Where does the storm water go after it drains into a storm drain?

A. Storm water that does not seep into the ground, drains into systems of underground pipes and may travel for many miles before being released into the streams.

Q. If it only affects streams and creeks, why should I care?

A. Streams and creeks feed into rivers, lakes and the ocean. We all drink water, so we are all affected when our water systems are polluted. When water treatment costs rise, the price of drinking water goes up. Money made from tourism and water recreation can also be impacted, as are businesses and homes flooded by stormwater runoff. When we pollute our water, everyone is affected!

Q. What can I do to reduce the amount of stormwater pollution I contribute?

A.

- If you own a car, maintain it so it does not leak oil or other fluids. Be sure to wash it on the grass or at a car wash so the dirt and soap do not flow down the driveway and into the nearest storm drain.
- If you own a yard, do not over fertilize your grass. Never apply fertilizers or pesticides before a heavy rain. If fertilizer falls onto driveways or sidewalks, sweep it up instead of hosing it away. Mulch leaves and grass clippings and place leaves in the yard at the curb, not in the street. Doing this keeps leaves out of the gutter, where they can wash into the nearest storm drain. Turn your gutter downspouts away from hard surfaces, seed bare spots in your yard to avoid erosion and consider building a rain garden in low-lying areas of your lawn.
- Pet owners should pick up after their pets and dispose of pet waste in the garbage.
- Keep lawn and household chemicals tightly sealed and in a place where rain cannot reach them. Dispose of old or unwanted chemicals at household hazardous waste collections sites or events.
- Never put anything in a storm drain.