

# STORMWATER POLLUTION

## What is it?



Common sense tells us that rainwater is one of the purest forms of water there is. So, how is it possible that rainwater can be one of the largest contributing factors of environmental pollution? This process is quite simple when you break it down. The journey from our atmosphere to the ground is not the problem, the pollution lies in the journey from impermeable surface which rain falls upon, to the storm water system and then on to our rivers.

When rainwater falls on our streets, sidewalks, and driveways, it is unable to soak into the soils that have been paved over by urbanization. Instead, the rainwater is directed into the nearest storm drain by means of sloping pavement and curb & gutter systems. As storm water moves across these impermeable surfaces and into the storm water system, it picks up chemicals, debris, and waste left on the ground. Once these pollutants are picked up by runoff they travel to our lakes and rivers via, storm drainage systems.

Unlike the sanitary sewer system, storm water drainage does not get treated before discharging into creeks and rivers. This means that whatever the rain flushes down these storm drains winds up in the lakes and rivers where we go fishing, swimming, boating, and camping. People who would never dream of polluting a lake or river might pour antifreeze, fertilizer, paint and used motor oil, or toss pet waste, cigarette butts and trash down storm drains and not realize they are polluting waterways.

### Common Pollutants we all can help control:

- Lawn fertilizers and weed killers
- Insecticides and fungicides
- Loose grass clippings and leaves
- Soil from exposed areas in the yard
- Pet Waste
- Poorly maintained septic systems
- Soap and detergents from car washing
- Engine fluids from poorly maintained vehicles
- Household cleaners
- Paint
- Oil and other chemicals
- Sediment runoff from construction sites
- Track out from construction sites
- Trash and litter



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