



RESPECT OUR WATERS

What is stormwater pollution?

Rain is great for our lawns and gardens but the extra water that isn't absorbed by the ground can cause problems for Lake Michigan, our rivers and small inland lakes.

Many people don't realize that rain water that runs off of driveways and parking lots and flows down streets and into storm sewers becomes contaminated. It picks up litter, yard waste, lawn and auto chemicals and other debris. That flow of polluted water travels through underground pipes that lead directly to our rivers, streams and Lake Michigan. Unlike sewage, this water isn't normally treated.

The polluted mix dumps into our waterways with the dog poop, lawn fertilizer, car oil, cigarette butts, plastic water bottles and anything else the water picked up along the way.

This mixture of rain water and pollution is called stormwater runoff. If you visit Lake Michigan or a river after it's rained, you can see stormwater spreading out into the surrounding clean water. It's noticeable because it's a muddy color and often carries litter with it.

Contaminated stormwater can lead to beach closings, fish die offs and detrimental ecological changes. The most effective way to reduce stormwater pollution is to stop it from entering the system in the first place.

Everyone can make a difference just by picking up after their dogs, keeping leaves and other yard waste out of the street, using less lawn fertilizer and chemicals, attending to car leaks and throwing away litter. Those simple actions can have an enormous cumulative impact on our waterways. In reality, every little bit helps.

Quick tip!

Looking for a easy way to make a change? Try diverting your drain spouts into your yard instead of into your driveway or sidewalk.

This allows the water to filter through the soil before it enters groundwater and reduces the amount of runoff from your home!

This information was brought to you by Southeastern Wisconsin Watersheds Trust, Inc. in accordance with WDNR NR.216

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