

Make Your Home the Solution to Stormwater Pollution



Be an H2O Hero and be part of the solution to protecting our local waterways from pollution.



When it rains, stormwater flows from rooftops, driveways, lawns, sidewalks, roads, and parking lots into the storm sewer system. Along the way, stormwater picks up soil, chemicals, bacteria, litter and other pollutants. In most neighborhoods, the stormwater system discharges this polluted runoff directly to the nearest waterway with little or no treatment. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, polluted stormwater is the nation's greatest threat to clean water.

However, you can prevent stormwater pollution by practicing green household habits that keep automotive fluids, detergents, pesticides, fertilizers, grass clippings, and pool discharges out of the storm drain. **Remember, only rain down the drain!**

Car and Driveway:



- Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on a lawn to prevent dirty, soapy water flowing into the storm drain.

- Check your car for leaks and make repairs as soon as possible. Clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material like kitty litter or sand and dispose of it in the trash. Never rinse a spill into a nearby storm drain.
- Recycle used oil and other automotive fluids at service stations. Don't dump these liquids down the storm drain or dispose of them in your trash.
- Use de-icing salts sparingly as excessive quantities of these materials can harm waterways.

Lawn and Garden:



- Save money and protect water quality by using pesticides and fertilizers very sparingly or not at all.
- Avoid broadcast applications of pesticides. Instead spot treat trouble areas only.
- Use zero phosphorus fertilizer and sweep up the driveway and sidewalk to insure that none enters the storm drain. Local soils typically have adequate phosphorus to support good turf growth.
- Install rain barrels to collect the runoff from your roof for reuse in your gardens or landscaping. The overflow from the barrels can be directed to a rain garden so that it can soak into the ground. These techniques protect water quality by reducing the quantity of stormwater runoff.



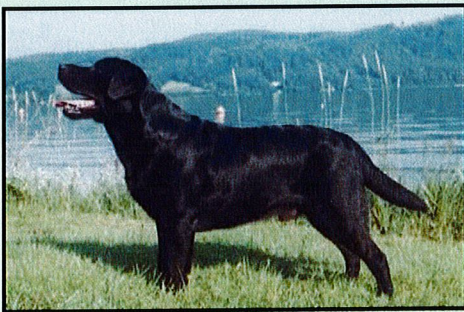
- Compost grass clippings and leaves. Never dump yard waste into the storm drains, stormwater ponds, or swales as this can cause flooding and damage water quality.

Home Repair and Improvement:



- Use hazardous substances like paints, solvents, and cleaners in the smallest amounts possible and follow the directions on the label. Store substances properly to avoid leaks and spills.
- Whenever possible use nontoxic, biodegradable, recycled, and recyclable products.
- Properly dispose of hazardous wastes at the Monroe County Household Hazardous Waste Facility. To make an appointment, call 753-7600 (Option 3).

Pet Care:



- Clean up pet waste and dispose of it properly by placing it in the trash. Leaving pet waste on the ground allows harmful bacteria and nutrients to wash into the storm drain. Excessive bacteria levels can result in beach closings.

Swimming Pool:



- Drain your swimming pool only when a test kit does not detect chlorine. This generally takes about 24 hours. Pool water should be directed to a level, highly vegetated section of your lawn so that it can infiltrate into the ground rather than contribute to stormwater pollution. Pool chemicals should be stored in a covered area to prevent leakage and stormwater pollution.

Septic System Maintenance:

- If you have a septic system, proper maintenance is very important in order to protect human health and water quality. Have your septic tank pumped out every two to three years by a Department of Environmental Conservation permitted waste hauler.

More Information & Becoming Involved:

- For more information about downspout disconnections, rain barrels, rain gardens and other ideas for reducing stormwater pollution visit www.H2OHero.org
- For information about upcoming events including storm drain marking, rain barrel and rain garden classes, stream corridor plantings, and watershed clean ups visit **Larry the H2O Hero** on facebook. Larry's fanpage also includes postings about other H2O Heroes in the community.

