

Household Habits for Healthy Waters

Clean Storm Water Starts at Home

Your actions on the land directly impact the quality of the rivers, streams, and lakes. Be a part of the solution to storm water pollution

- ***Choose environmentally friendly household products.***
Most household products are toxic, ignitable, corrosive, and reactive. Humans can be exposed to hazardous chemicals by inhaling, swallowing, and absorption through skin/eyes. Look for cleaners that are biodegradable, non-toxic, and/or contain plant-based ingredients. Product certifications include Green Seal, US EPA Design for the Environment, or Greenguard. Or learn to make your own environmentally friendly household cleaners.
- ***Contact your county's Solid Waste District for procedures and locations to dispose of household hazardous wastes.***
Americans generate 1.6 million tons of harmful household waste per year. The average home accumulates as much as 100lbs of hazardous waste over time. These include: aerosols, appliances, batteries, corrosives, electronics, flammable liquids, fluorescent lamps, mercury products, oil & oil filters, paints, pesticides, and tires.
- ***Pick up pet waste and dispose of it properly***
Pet waste is teeming with E. Coli and other harmful bacteria including fecal coliform bacteria, which causes serious kidney disorders, intestinal illness, cramps and diarrhea in humans. (There are 23 million fecal coliform bacteria in a single gram of pet waste!) . You may not live near water, but unscooped poop from your yard is carried by overland water flow or is washed into storm drains, ending up in far away streams, rivers and ground water.
- ***Inspect and pump your septic system every 2-3 years***
Inadequately treated sewage from septic systems can be a cause of groundwater contamination. It poses a significant threat to drinking water and human health because it can contaminate drinking water wells and cause diseases and infections in people and animals. Improperly treated sewage that contaminates nearby surface waters also increases the chance of swimmers contracting a variety of infectious diseases.

What is a watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that drains rain and snow to a body of water. We all live in a watershed! Rainwater from roofs, lawns, driveways, streets, roadside ditches and parking lots drains to small creeks that flow into streams before eventually entering Lake Erie. On its way, this "storm water" picks up oil and antifreeze that drips from our cars, excess fertilizer and pesticides from our lawns, litter, grass clippings, leaves, and pet waste. Keeping pollutants out of our waterways is less expensive than cleaning up the water in our treatment plant.

Let's keep our streams and rivers, our Great Lake, and our drinking water supplies healthy.

For more helpful hints, contact the
Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District
www.cuyahogawcd.org

