

## Stormwater Saavy

**Stormwater** is rainfall or snowmelt that does not infiltrate into the ground or evaporate. Stormwater runoff can occur in any landscape. In urban areas it is largely due to impervious surfaces (rooftops, sidewalks, and roads) as well as areas of vegetation removal or compaction.

***So, what's the issue?*** Rainfall striking natural and man-made surfaces dislodges pollutants which are transported in stormwater runoff. This is referred to as nonpoint source pollution. In communities where the sanitary and storm sewers are separate, stormwater is conveyed through ditches and piping and discharged **untreated** into receiving waters such as lakes, creeks, rivers, or wetlands. Common pollutants from urban areas include automotive fluids, lawn care chemicals, trash, sediment from exposed and eroded soil, bacteria and viruses from pet waste and failing wastewater and septic systems, and nutrients from waste and lawn debris. Pollutants in stormwater negatively impact water quality in receiving waters. Poor water quality diminishes and destroys aquatic habitats, can be harmful to wildlife, is costlier to treat, and makes our waterways unsafe for recreational activities.

***What can I do?*** We all contribute to nonpoint source pollution. If everyone takes a small action step to reduce pollutants, we can make large strides in improving water quality.

- Keep leaves and grass clippings out of storm drains.
- Pick up pet waste.
- Properly apply and dispose of lawn chemicals such as fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides.
- Maintain vehicles to minimize leaks of automotive fluids.
- Have your septic system regularly inspected and cleaned by a qualified professional.

***Remember, we all benefit from clean water. Let's do our part and work together to keep our waterways clean and protect this valuable natural resource.***

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### References and Resources:

HENV-203: Stormwater

AEN-106: Reducing Stormwater Pollution

### **Social media image accompanies this article.**

**Description:** Stormwater runoff carries pollutants to our streams

**Content:** In most communities, stormwater is transported through ditches or underground piping. It carries pollutants such as oils, chemicals, and debris from our streets and yards to local waterways. These pollutants degrade water quality which has negative ecological, environmental, and economic consequences.