

KEEP STORMWATER CLEAN

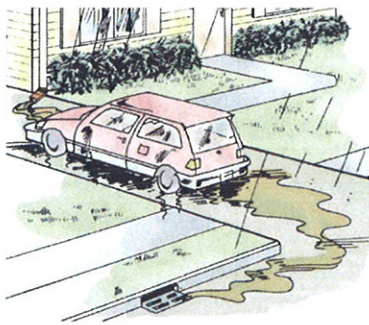
PROTECT OUR LAKES & STREAMS



WHY IS STORMWATER RUNOFF A PROBLEM?

When rain falls or snow melts, much of the water that doesn't soak into the ground runs off into rivers and lakes.

This runoff water is carried away by a network of storm drains and pipes that empty directly into rivers and lakes. This runoff water is typically not treated at a treatment plant.



Stormwater runoff.



Sediment plume.



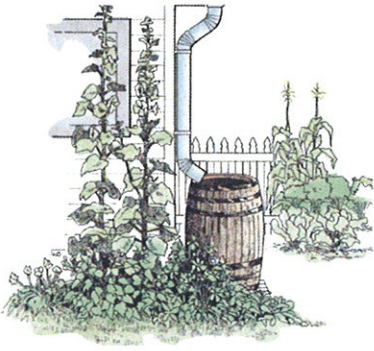
Polluted river.

- ◆ **Stormwater runs off** impervious (hard) surfaces such as roofs and pavement.
- ◆ **Stormwater runoff** picks up soil, leaves, nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus, motor oil, road salt, and a host of other pollutants in our parking lots, driveways and streets.
- ◆ **Sediment clouds the water** in streams and lakes and can affect the ability of fish to find food and to breathe.
- ◆ **Nutrients cause nuisance algae** and excess plants to grow. When the algae and plants die, they decay. This process of decay consumes oxygen, which can deprive other aquatic organisms of the oxygen they need to live.
- ◆ **Flooding can occur** as a result of paved-over surfaces that reduce infiltration and increase runoff.



UW Extension

Graphic design by Ann DeSantis, UW Extension Environmental Education Center



WHAT CAN YOU DO AT HOME?

Keep stormwater clean.
Help stormwater soak
into the ground.

- ◆ **Minimize impervious areas** on your property.
- ◆ **Minimize the amount of phosphorus and pesticides** used on lawns. Ensure healthy lawns by aerating and setting the mower at 3.5 inches or higher.
- ◆ **Direct downspouts away** from paved surfaces. Use rain gardens to help water soak in, or use rain barrels to collect rain water and use it to water lawns and gardens.
- ◆ **Compost** yard waste.
- ◆ **Clean up** pet waste.
- ◆ **Don't empty** anything into storm drains.
- ◆ **Maintain vehicles** to prevent leaks, and recycle motor oil.
- ◆ **Establish buffers** of native vegetation in shoreland areas.



Natural shoreline.



Pervious pavers.



Keeping fertilizer on the lawn.



Rain garden under construction.



Downspout to lawn.



Pet waste clean-up.