Town/Village of Harrison
Stormwater Management Quarterly – Volume 1

STORMWATER FAQ's

WHAT IS STORMWATER RUNOFF?

Stormwater runoff is water from rain or melting snow that "runs off" across land instead of seeping into the ground. This runoff usually flows into the nearest stream, creek, river, lake or ocean. The runoff is not treated in any way.

WHAT IS POLLUTED RUNOFF?

As stormwater makes it way to the nearest body of water, it can pick up and carry pollutants, such as pesticides, fertilizers, oil and soap, which can harm water when present in sufficient quantities.

WHAT IS NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION?

Nonpoint Source Pollution is a source of pollution that is hard to pinpoint.

WHAT CAUSES POLLUTED STORMWATER RUNOFF?

People going about their daily lives are the number one source of stormwater pollution. Most people are unaware of how they impact water quality. Some common examples include over fertilizing lawns, excessive pesticide use, not picking up pet waste, using salt to de-ice driveways and littering.

WHY DO WE NEED TO MANAGE STORMWATER AND POLLUTED RUNOFF?

Polluted water creates numerous costs to the public and to wildlife. It costs more to clean up polluted water than to protect water from being polluted. Sediment damages wildlife habitats, chemicals damage plants and animals as they enter the water and fertilizers use up oxygen affecting the ability of wildlife to survive.

HOW ARE STORMWATER AND RUNOFF MANAGED?

"Best Management Practices" is a term used to describe the different ways to keep pollutants out of runoff and to slow down high volumes of runoff. Keeping pollutants from entering runoff, practicing erosion control measures, use of detention ponds to collect runoff and permeable paving are examples of a few "best management practices".

WHY ALL THE FUSS ABOUT STORMWATER?

The federal Clean Water Act requires towns to take steps necessary steps to reduce stormwater runoff. Towns are required to do the following:

1. Conduct outreach and education about stormwater runoff.
2. Provide opportunities for residents to participate in conversations and activities related to reducing polluted stormwater runoff.
3. Detect illicit discharges.
4. Control construction site runoff.
5. Control post-construction site runoff.
6. Perform municipal housekeeping to take steps to prevent runoff from town buildings and activities.

IF IT ONLY AFFECTS STREAMS AND CREEKS, WHY SHOULD I CARE?

Streams and creeks feed into rivers, lakes and the ocean. We all drink water, so we are all affected when our water is polluted. The cost to treat polluted water rises and the price of drinking water increases. If you like to swim, fish or go boating, you may have been affected by advisories warning against the use of the water for recreational purposes.

WHAT CAN I DO TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF STORMWATER POLLUTION I CONTRIBUTE?

If you own a car, maintain it so it does not leak oil or other fluids. Be sure to wash it on the grass or at a car wash so the dirt and soap do not flow down the driveway and into the nearest storm drain.

If you own a yard, do not over fertilize your grass. Never apply fertilizers or pesticides before heavy rain. If fertilizer falls onto driveways or sidewalks, sweep it up instead of hosing it away. Mulch leaves and grass clippings and place leaves in the yard at the curb, not in the street. Doing this keeps leaves out of the gutter, where they can wash into the nearest storm drain. Turn your gutter downspouts away from hard surfaces, seed bare spots in your yard to avoid erosion and consider building a rain garden in low-lying areas of your lawn.

If you have a septic system, maintain it properly by having it pumped every three to five years. If it is an older system, be sure it can still handle the volume placed on it today. Never put chemicals down septic systems, they can harm the system and seep into the groundwater.

Pet owners should pick up after their pets and dispose of pet waste in the garbage.

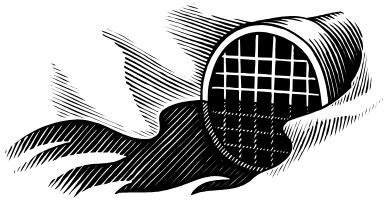
Keep lawn and household chemicals tightly sealed and in a place where rain cannot reach them. Dispose of old or unwanted chemicals at household hazardous waste collections sites or events.

Never put anything in a storm drain.

Don't litter.

HOW ELSE CAN I HELP REDUCE STORMWATER POLLUTION IN MY AREA?

Participate in the next stream or beach cleanup in your area. Storm drain stenciling events – where the destination of storm water is clearly marked on the drain – are a fun way to let your neighbors know the storm drain is only for rain. Attend public hearings or meetings on the topic so you can express your concerns. Report stormwater violations when you spot them, to your local government. Keep learning about polluted stormwater runoff and tell a friend!



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