

# **-STORMWATER RUNOFF- WHAT CAN WE DO TO PROTECT THE VILLAGE OF HUNTLEY WATER RESOURCES?**

## **RUNOFF - WHAT IS IT?**

Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation from rain or snowmelt flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent stormwater from naturally soaking into the ground.

## **RUNOFF - IS IT A PROBLEM?**

Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants and flow into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream, river, wetland, or coastal water. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into the waterbodies used for swimming, fishing, and providing drinking water.

## **RUNOFF, POLLUTION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY**

Polluted stormwater runoff may have adverse effects on plants, fish, animals, and people.

- ⇒ Sediment can cloud the water and make it difficult or impossible for aquatic plants to grow. Sediment also can destroy aquatic habitats.
- ⇒ Excess nutrients can cause algae blooms. When algae die, they sink to the bottom and decompose in a process that removes oxygen from the water. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't exist in water with low dissolved oxygen levels.
- ⇒ Bacteria and other pathogens can wash into swimming areas and create health hazards, often making beach closures necessary.
- ⇒ Debris such as plastic bags, six-pack rings, bottles, and cigarette butts washed into waterbodies can choke, suffocate, or disable aquatic life like ducks, fish, turtles, and birds.
- ⇒ Household hazardous wastes like insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil, and other auto fluids can poison aquatic life.
- ⇒ Land animals and people can become sick or die from eating diseased fish and shellfish or ingesting polluted water.
- ⇒ Polluted stormwater often affects drinking water sources. This, in turn, can affect human health and increase drinking water treatment costs.





# YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE - FROM HOME AND AT WORK

Do not pour anything into the storm drains

Recycle or properly dispose of household products that contain chemicals such as insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, motor oil and other auto fluids.

## LOCAL RECYCLING OPTIONS

MCHENRY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

PH: 815-334-4585 WEBSITE: [www.mcdh.info](http://www.mcdh.info)

KANE COUNTY RECYCLES

PH: 630-208-3842 WEBSITE: [www.countyofkane.org/recycling](http://www.countyofkane.org/recycling)

## LAWN CARE AT HOME

Excess fertilizers and pesticides applied to lawns and gardens wash off and pollute streams. In addition, yard clippings and leaves can wash into storm drains and contribute nutrients and organic matter to streams.

Don't overwater your lawn. Consider using a soaker hose instead of a sprinkler.

Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly. When use is necessary, use these chemicals in the recommended amounts. Use organic mulch or safer pest control methods whenever possible.

Compost or mulch yard waste. Don't leave it in the street or sweep it into storm drains or streams.

Cover piles of dirt or mulch being used in landscaping projects.

Consider using permeable pavement, rain barrels, rain gardens, grassy swales or vegetated filter strips to help trap and divert pollutants.

## COMMERCIAL

Dirt, oil, and debris that collect in parking lots and paved areas can be washed into the storm sewer system and eventually enter local water bodies. Businesses should also do their part to protect our water resources:

- Sweep up litter and debris from sidewalks, driveways and parking lots, especially around storm drains.
- Cover grease storage and dumpsters and keep them clean to avoid leaks.
- Report any chemical spill to the local hazardous waste cleanup team. They'll know the best way to keep spills from harming the environment.

## AUTO CARE AT HOME

Washing your car and degreasing auto parts at home can send detergents and other contaminants through the storm sewer system. Dumping automotive fluids into storm drains has the same result as dumping the materials directly into a waterbody.

Use a commercial car wash that treats or recycles its wastewater, or wash your car on your yard so the water infiltrates into the ground.

Repair leaks and dispose of used auto fluids and batteries at designated drop-off or recycling locations.

## PET WASTE CLEAN-UP

Pet waste can be a major source of bacteria and excess nutrients in local waters.

When walking your pet, remember to pick up the waste and dispose of it properly. Flushing pet waste is the best disposal method. Leaving pet waste on the ground increases public health risks by allowing harmful bacteria and nutrients to wash into the storm drain and eventually into local waterbodies.

