

# Downspouts and stormwater



The leading causes of polluted stormwater runoff in urban areas are impervious surfaces, such as rooftops and driveways and compacted soil with little organic matter content.

Do you realize a 1,200 square foot home generates over 700 gallons of water during a one inch rain? Downspout runoff isn't given much thought unless water is seeping into the basement.

Stormwater runoff is greater when downspout(s) are directed to hard surfaces that don't soak up the rain. This, in turn, may jeopardize water quality as stormwater runoff quickly drains to the street and into the storm drain system.

## **Redirect downspouts to vegetated areas to reduce stormwater runoff.**

Redirecting downspout runoff cools down rooftop water and gives time for the water to be absorbed and infiltrated into the surrounding landscape.

It's one of the simplest of practices neighbors can engage in to reduce stormwater runoff and improve water quality!

## **Maintain a distance of eight foot between your home's foundation and downspout to prevent wet basement issues.**

### **The downspout "elbow."**

Downspouts directed to impervious surfaces can easily be redirected with a downspout elbow. Simply slip the elbow onto the end of the downspout turning it toward a vegetated area.

**Gill, the Famous ISWEP Spokesfish, invites you to learn more about stormwater pollution prevention:**



**IowaStormwater.Org**



# Soil Health and stormwater

Did you realize there is a direct connection between soil health, stormwater runoff and water quality? Without healthy soil more runoff is generated and the quality of water in our local creeks, streams and rivers may be degraded.



*Unhealthy soil* is compacted with little soil organic matter (SOM). Compaction happens when soil pore space, reserved for water storage, is compressed. Soil compaction is typically caused by heavy equipment used in building new homes or heavy foot traffic from kids playing on existing yards.

**The first step to rebuilding a healthy soil profile is reducing compaction.**

**Core aerate to pull small plugs of thatch and soil from your lawn, decrease compaction and improve root growth.**

**Increasing SOM is the second step to rebuilding healthy soil.**

SOM is typically found in the top six inches of topsoil. Organic matter in the soil is key to storing water and nutrients for growing turf and plants to use. A thin layer of topsoil means little SOM. Little SOM means more stormwater runoff.

**After aeration, topdress with 1/4 - 1/2 inch of mature compost. Mulch mow *rather than bag* lawn clippings to replenish SOM.**

**Learn more about capturing rain where it falls.  
RainscapingIowa.Org**



#### **Waterloo Spill Reporting Hotlines**

8:00 am - 5:00 pm, Monday - Friday: (319) 291-4312

After Hours and on Weekends: (319) 291-4553

Or Report Spills On-Line Anytime: [Ci.Waterloo.Ia.Us/IllicitDischarge](http://Ci.Waterloo.Ia.Us/IllicitDischarge)