

Storm Water Pollution Prevention

Each and every one of us can make a positive difference in preventing pollution in our neighborhood creeks and lakes. Here are a few simple things you can do to help:

- 1. Don't wash your car on the driveway.** Did you know that the most common pollutions in storm drain's and neighborhood creeks is detergent? Washing your car at home not only uses more gallons of water than a commercial car wash, but it also introduces soap, oil, and engine grime to the environment. The dirty water and soap washes off your car, flows down your driveway, down the street, into a curb inlet, and ends up in a nearby creek. Detergents in our creeks and ponds pose a very real threat to our fish. Use a commercial wash instead. It doesn't matter if it is automated or self-service, the wastewater generated at these facilities is sent to a wastewater treatment plant where it is thoroughly cleaned before being returned to local lakes and/or rivers. However, if you must wash you car at home, these tips will help minimize pollution: try using just water and a rag; use only minimal amounts of soap; use a spray release nozzle for your hose to reduce water use and runoff into the street; or wash your car on the lawn – your yard acts as a sponge and prevents soapy water from flowing down the curb.
- 2. Use pesticides wisely.** Pesticides and fertilizers pollute our neighborhood creeks, rivers, and lakes when they're applied incorrectly, disposed of improperly or run off into curbs and storm drains during heavy rains or over-watering. To protect our water:
 - Don't use garden chemicals when rain is expected.
 - Follow directions carefully; using more than recommended won't work any faster.
 - Use pesticides and herbicides that relate only to the bug or problem you're to correct.
 - Never pour garden chemicals down storm drain, manhole, toilet, or household drain or let them run off your lawn into the street.
- 3. Practice dry cleanup methods.** Instead of hosing down your driveway or sidewalk, use a broom to sweep up waste. For oil spills use a product such as cat litter to absorb the oil, then sweep up the litter and place it in your trash.
- 4. Don't dump it!** Never pour paint, used oil, or other chemicals into the street or down a storm drain! If you have useable leftover items, share them with family or neighbors. Used oil, old paint, and other

household chemicals may not be placed in your trash for collection. Dispose of them at a Environmental Collection Center.

5. **Clean up after your pet.** Pet waste left on the ground will wash into creeks and lakes the time it rains, contributing harmful bacteria and viruses to pr waterways. So it's important to clean up after your pet whether they make the waste in your backyard or while out on a walk. Flush their "poo" down the toilet or wrap it in a plastic bag and put it in your trash container.
6. **Remember that "every litter bit hurts."** Litter is a significant source of storm water pollution. Litter and debris cause storm drain blockage that lead to flooding, impair water quality as well as the aesthetic and recreational value of waters, and may also be hazard to wildlife. Letter washes down the street during a rain shower, goes into the storm drain system, and ends up in our neighborhood creeks, rivers, and lakes. And it stays there a long time. Cigarette butts can take 25 years to break down because of the plastic filters; plastic six-pack rings can take 100 years to break down; and glass bottles will take 1,000 years. Keep a litter bag in your car, and make sure that cargo in the bed of your pickup is secured! Never sweep or blow leaves or lawn clipping into a storm drain inlet. Sweep them up and put them in your compost pile or bag them for yard waste collection.