

Citizen's Guide to Stormwater

Understanding Stormwater and Its Impacts

WHAT IS STORMWATER POLLUTION?

Stormwater picks up and carries numerous pollutants into our waterways, known commonly as stormwater pollutants. These pollutants may include, but are not limited to: antifreeze, grease, oil, and heavy metals from cars; fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals from gardens, homes and businesses, and bacteria from pet wastes and failing septic systems.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND STORMWATER AND ITS IMPACTS?

In short, stormwater is important because it can lead to pollution, erosion, flooding and many other environmental and health issues if not properly understood and maintained.

For this reason, we must keep it clean so we can enjoy clean water to drink, for recreational use, to support habitat for wildlife, and to allow aquatic life to survive. As we go through our daily lives, it is easy to overlook the ways we can contaminate our waters. Being conscious of the decisions we make is the first step to clean water.

The quality of our waters depends on your actions. We can work together to protect our local waterways and keep stormwater clean!

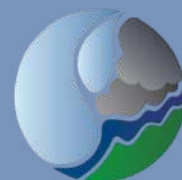


WHEN IT RAINS-IT DRAINS!

Rain and melting snow create runoff as they move across landscapes to lakes, streams, rivers, and other waterways. In natural areas, this water can soak into the ground because the soil and vegetation act like a sponge. However, in urban areas, most stormwater falls onto hard or impervious surfaces such as streets, sidewalks, parking lots, roofs, and carries pesticides, fertilizers, oils, metals, salt, bacteria, litter, yard waste, sediment, and other materials found on these surfaces down storm drains and directly into our local waterways. Unlike wastewater, water that enters the stormwater system is not treated before it empties into nearby bodies of water.

The stormwater system consists of storm drains, gutters, drainage ditches and catch basins. This system is separate from the sewer system which goes to a treatment facility. Because stormwater goes directly to the waterways, it is important to be informed about stormwater management issues and join with the local municipalities to address stormwater problems.

Report Spills or Stormwater Pollution to Town Manager Heath Jenkins at 704-263-4779 or hjenkins@townofstanley.org or Craig Roseberry at croseberry@townofstanley.org
For more information, visit:
<https://regionalstormwater.org/report-pollution/>



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Tips for Reducing Stormwater Pollution

CHECK STORM DRAINS OFTEN

Locate the storm drains around your home and check them often. You can remove debris, leaves and trash from around the grate to prevent a blockage or litter ending up in the storm drainage system. Always keep yard waste out of storm drains and dispose of it properly. For major blockage or sediment building inside a storm drain, report it to the stormwater contact listed below.



IMPLEMENT NATURAL AREAS OR GARDENS AROUND YOUR PROPERTY

Specifically-designed areas planted with native plants can provide natural places for rainwater to collect and soak into the ground, which could prevent flooding. In addition, rain from rooftops or paved areas can be diverted into these areas rather than into the storm drain, limiting stormwater runoff.

PICK UP AFTER YOUR PETS

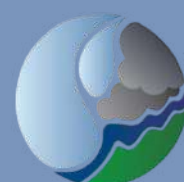
Bacteria, parasites and diseases from pet waste can be easily picked up by stormwater and washed into storm drains, ending up in our waterways without being treated. This poses public health concerns and impact areas of recreation. Cleaning up after your pet results in cleaner areas of recreation and safer waterways for all!



WASH YOUR CAR AT A CARWASH FACILITY

When you wash a car at home, all of the dirt, grime, and grease from your car washes down the driveway into the nearest storm drain. This runoff also contains chemicals and soaps, which are harmful to aquatic life. However, dirty water from commercial car washes goes to the sanitary system and is treated posing no harm.

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LIMIT PESTICIDE AND FERTILIZER USE

One of the many pollutants that make their way into storm drain systems are pesticides, which include insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides. If this pollution enters our waterways it can contaminate drinking water, injure aquatic species, and restrict recreational uses. If you utilize these chemicals, always follow directions for proper application and use only when necessary.



TAKE UNWANTED HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS TO A RECYCLE CENTER

Household Hazardous Wastes (HHWs) are chemicals used in homes that are toxic, flammable, corrosive and/or explosive such as motor oil, cleaners, nail polish, etc. Always check the label for proper disposal and never dump these wastes down a storm drain, sink or toilet! A gallon of HHW can pollute millions of gallons of water. For more information on where to recycle these wastes near you, visit:

<https://earth911.com/recycling-center-search-guides/>

PROTECT OUR STREAMS BY REDUCING MUDDY SEDIMENTS

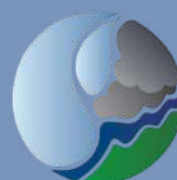
Sediment is the number one source of pollution in NC waterways and is made up of soil particles that have been detached from the land by erosion. Consequently, the source of sediment can be from bare soil from construction sites or farm fields, poorly maintained dirt and gravel roads, or degrading stream banks. If you suspect a sediment build up near storm drains or in waterways, report pollution to the municipal contact below.



REDUCE LITTER AND KEEP STREAMS CLEAN TO IMPROVE OUR WATER QUALITY

Small amounts of litter around your home and neighborhood contribute to a big water quality problem. Therefore, it is important to dispose of trash before it becomes litter and to properly secure and close lids on your receptacles. You can also be an active volunteer by joining your local municipality or county agency in street or stream clean up events! Search online for volunteer clean up opportunities with local nonprofit organizations or your municipality.

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