UNDERSTANDING STORMWATER

What Is Stormwater Runoff?

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.

Why Be Concerned With Stormwater Runoff?

Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants, which then flow into the storm sewer system. Anything entering a storm sewer in Edgewater is discharged untreated into Sloan Lake and the Platte River. People use this water for swimming, fishing, agricultural uses and providing drinking water.

THE EFFECTS OF POLLUTION

Polluted stormwater runoff can have many 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.

Debris, plastic bags, six pack rings, bottles, cigarette butts and yard waste washed into waterbodies can cause flooding, dump debris on neighboring lands and choke, suffocate, or disable aquatic life.

Household hazardous wastes such as 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.

RESIDENTIAL STORMWATER POLLUTION SOLUTIONS

LANDSCAPING

- Permeable Pavement – Concrete and asphalt don't allow water to soak into the ground. Permeable pavement systems allow rain and snowmelt to soak through, decreasing stormwater runoff.
- Rain Gardens & Grassy Swales – Specially designed areas with native plants can provide natural places for rainwater to collect and soak into the ground. Rain from rooftops and paved areas can be diverted into these natural areas rather than into storm drains.
- Swimminmg Pools – Drain your dechlorinated swimming pool , spa, fountain or pond to landscaped areas.

LAWN CARE

- In addition, yard clippings and leaves can wash into storm drains and contribute nutrients.
- Excess fertilizers and pesticides applied to lawns and gardens wash off and pollute 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 in recommended amounts. Use organic products when possible.
- Compost or mulch yard waste. Don't leave it in the street or sweep it into storm drains.
- Cover piles of dirt or mulch being used in landscape projects.

AUTO CARE

- 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 directly into a waterbody.
- Using a commercial car wash that treats or recycles its wastewater, or wash your car on your lawn 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

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 properly. Flushing pet waste in the toilet 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 drains and eventually into local waterbodies.