

Only Rain in the Storm Drain!

In Fort Wayne, many neighborhoods have storm sewers that carry water directly to a pond, lake, ditch, stream, or even straight to a river. So what you do on your property can have a significant impact on the quality of the water in area streams.

What can you do to help reduce the pollutants carried by storm sewers? Follow these tips and remember that only rain should be going into a storm drain:

SWEEP IT: If there is extra fertilizer, grass clippings or dirt on your driveway, sweep the material back onto your lawn. If you hose down the driveway, the water will carry these pollutants into storm drains that may lead directly to a stream or river. Even leaves and grass clippings can be a problem because they may block the storm drain making street flooding more likely during a heavy rainstorm. Also, it's important to follow fertilizer application directions to ensure that you're not overapplying fertilizer – which could cause the excess to wash away in the next rain.

PICK IT UP: The right place for trash is your trash or recycling container, not the street. You can help to keep your neighborhood looking good and help to reduce pollution by disposing of trash properly. In the fall, bag leaves or collect them in spot on the parkstrip for collection by the Fort Wayne Street Department – don't rake them into the street. Also, be sure to pick up pet waste and dispose of it in the trash or by flushing it down the toilet. One average size dog dropping can carry over 3 million disease causing bacteria! Better to pick it up than to let it wash into a stream.

ONLY RAIN IN THE DRAIN: Never dump anything down a storm drain. Cooking oil, automotive fluids, dirty or soapy water – all of these materials pollute. Oil can clog drain pipes and can cause slicks, making it impossible for aquatic life to breathe. Automotive fluids are made up primarily of organic chemicals that are harmful to fish and other water creatures. You can absorb small amounts of vehicle fluid with kitty litter. Then sweep it into a bag and put it in the trash. Detergents are high in phosphates, a major source of water pollution. Avoid sending soap suds or soapy water to a stream by using a commercial car wash rather than washing your car in the driveway.

If your neighborhood association or other group or organization would like to learn more about how to prevent stormwater pollution, contact the Partnership for Water Quality at 484-5848 ext. 111 to arrange for an informational presentation.