

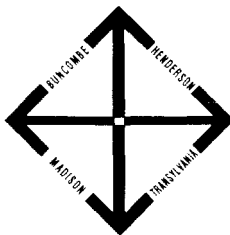
# How Citizens Can Help Control Stormwater Pollution



## Stormwater Fact Sheet No. 9

This fact sheet is part of a series for local government officials and citizen's on stormwater runoff problems and control strategies. The series covers:

1. Stormwater Problems And Impacts
2. Control Principles And Practices
3. Rules And Regulations
4. Local Program Elements And Funding Alternatives
5. Municipal Pollution Prevention Planning
6. Managing Stormwater In Small Communities: How To Get Started
7. Maintaining Wet Detention Ponds
8. Plan Early For Stormwater In Your New Development
9. How Citizens Can Help Control Stormwater Pollution



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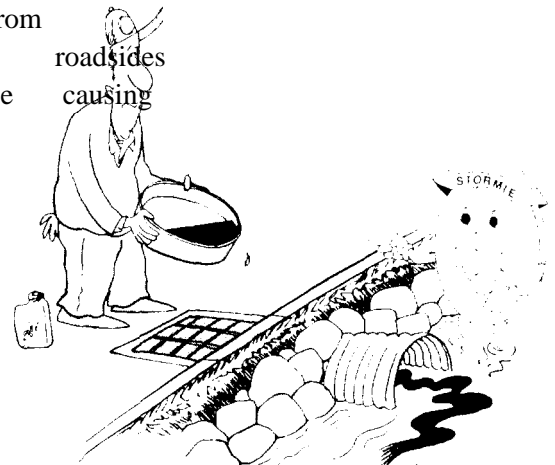
## What Is Stormwater Runoff?

Stormwater runoff is the rain or snowmelt that runs off streets, rooftops, parking lots, lawns and other land surfaces. As communities develop, more impervious surfaces are created and less rainfall can soak into the ground. This increases flooding and streambank erosion.

## Stormwater Is Not Clean Water!

Stormwater also picks up pollutants as it flows across land surfaces. Pollutants include:

- Sediment from bare areas like construction sites
- Pesticides and fertilizers from lawns, parks and roadsides
- Bacteria and disease causing organisms from pet waste and failing septic systems
- Oil and grease from car leaks, gas stations and industrial areas
- Salt used on roads and driveways, and
- Toxic chemicals from leaks, spills and auto wear and exhaust.



Sometimes pollutants (e.g., used oil, paint thinners, etc.) are illegally dumped directly into storm drains and waterways.

Did You Know That Oil Dumped Into The Storm Sewer Pollutes Our Water?

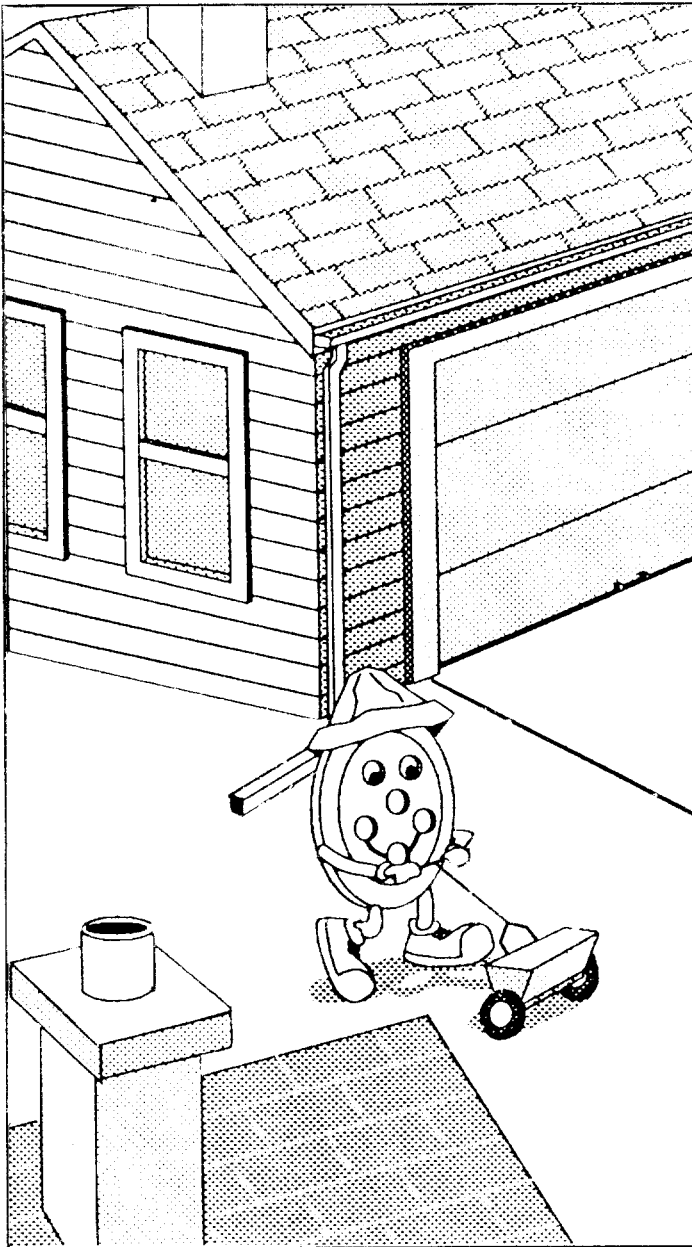
## Where Does Stormwater Go?

Stormwater typically flows into storm drains on parking lots and street curbs where it enters underground pipes called storm sewers. Unlike sanitary sewers, storm sewers do not lead to a treatment plant. So stormwater runoff directed to storm sewers usually receives no treatment before entering our streams, rivers, lakes and coastal waters. The result can be the contamination of our drinking water supplies or shellfishing waters, prohibitions on swimming, fishing or boating uses and injury to aquatic plants and animals.

## What You Can Do To Help:

As you can see, many of our daily activities have the potential to cause stormwater pollution. How you manage your property and day-to-day activities can determine the quality of your drinking water and local swimming and fishing areas. Remember, "You are the solution to pollution!" Here's how you can help prevent stormwater pollution:

- Minimize impervious areas to reduce runoff.
- Divert roof drains and other runoff to vegetated areas on your property.
- Preserve or plant trees and shrubs along streams to keep them cool.



*Minimize The Use Of Fertilizers And Pesticides  
On Your Lawn.*


- Retain or create 50 to 100 foot buffers of vegetation between waterways and impervious areas to help filter out pollutants.
- Keep your vehicles tuned up and repair leaks quickly.
- Wash your car on the lawn, not the driveway.
- Stop soil erosion – plant vegetation on all bare areas.
- Never pour used oil, paint thinners, and other pollutants into storm drains or waterways or on the ground. Take these household hazardous wastes to a recycling/collection center.
- Properly use and store all household chemicals. Clean up spills quickly.
- Use lawn care practices that protect water quality. Minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides on your lawn; sweep (don't wash) fertilizer off driveways and walkways and compost yard wastes.
- Clean litter from the street and stormdrains in front of your home and along streambanks to keep it out of our waters.
- Walk your dog in vegetated areas or bury or flush pet wastes.
- Design all new construction to prevent runoff and stormwater pollution.
- Report any pollution, illegal dumping or soil erosion that you see to authorities.
- Support agencies and organizations working on clean water programs.

## How Your Group or Community Can Help

- Organize a Streamwatch Group that "adopts" a stream, river or lake in your community., Contact the NC Streamwatch Program Coordinator listed on the back page for assistance.
- Conduct stream cleanups that remove trash and debris from waterways.
- Stencil storm drains with "Don't Dump – Drains to Waterway" messages to inform citizens that dumping pollutes local waters. Contact Sea Grant or Extension Service staff for assistance.
- Develop or expand community recycling/ collection programs for used oil, household hazardous wastes and other potential pollutants.
- Organize school and public education programs on stormwater problems and solutions.
- Help develop or improve community programs that prevent soil erosion, reduce runoff and




*Stenciling Storm Drains Is  
One Good Community Project*



### **Remember:**

- **What We Do On The Land Affects The Quality Of The Water We Drink And Use In So Many Ways**
- **Many Small Sources Of Pollution Add Up To Cause Big Water Quality Problems**
- **Natural Things Such As Soil, Leaves, Grass Clippings and Pet Waste Can Cause Water Pollution**
- **Waste Dumped Into Storm Sewers Goes Into Lakes, Streams and Coastal Waters Without Treatment**
- **Automobiles and Other Vehicles Cause Water Pollution As Well As Air Pollution**
- **Everyone Can Make A Difference!**

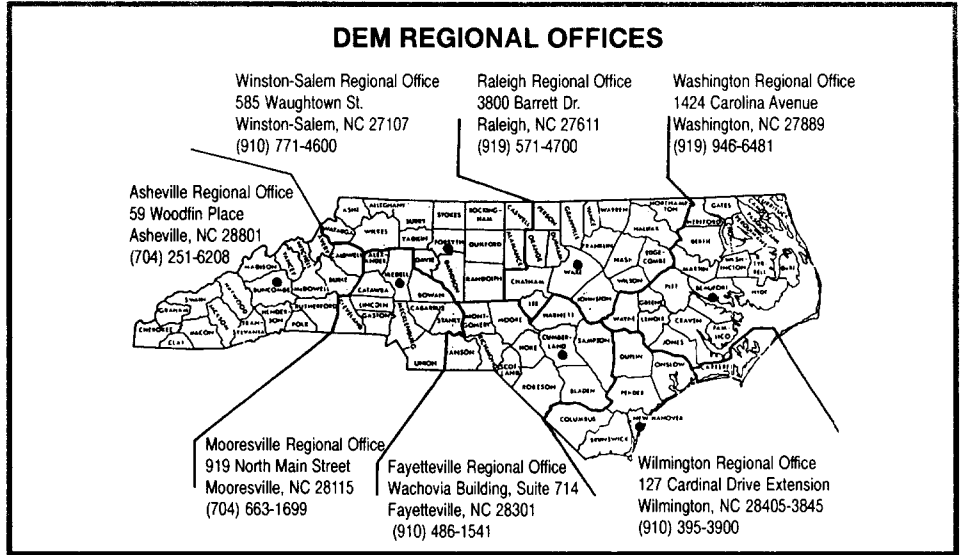


## For More Information

### ☐ Reference Documents

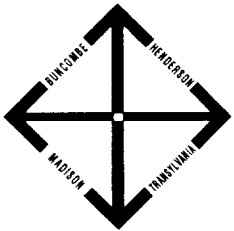
- Water Quality & Home Lawn Care, Pub. # WQWM-151, 1995, N.C. Cooperative Extension Service - (919) 515-5854.
- Stormwater Management in NC: A Guide For Local Officials, 1994, Land-of-Sky Regional Council. - (704) 251-6622.
- Stormwater Management Guidance Manual, 1994, NC Cooperative Extension Service and NC DEHNR - (919) 515-3723.
- How to Create a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Campaign, 1992, Environmental Health Coalition - (619) 235-0281.

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### ☐ Contacts

- NC DEM Stormwater Management Group - (919) 733-5083, and DEM Regional Offices.
- Barbara Doll, UNC Sea Grant Program - (919) 515-5287.
- NC Stream Watch Program - (919) 733-4064.
- Greg Jennings, N.C. Cooperative Extension Service - (919) 515-6795.



## **LAND-OF-SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL**

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