Be Part Of The Pollution Solution!

Help Clean Up Our Water Resources.

What Can You Do?

Wash your car on a grassy area so the ground can filter the water naturally.

Use soap sparingly and use non-phosphate detergents.

Use high pressure, low volume hose with a trigger nozzle to save water.

Empty your bucket of used, soapy water down the sink.

What Can You Do?

Scoop up pet waste.

Flush it down a toilet, as long as it’s not mixed with litter or other materials. This is the best method because your septic system or community sewage plant will treat the waste.

Never dump pet waste or plastic bags containing waste into a storm drain.

If your community does not regulate pet waste, encourage your local government to adopt a “pooper-scooper” ordinance.

If your local parks do not provide pet waste stations, encourage them to do so.

What Can You Do?

Use fertilizers sparingly. Lawns and many garden plants do not need as much fertilizer as you might think, especially if you use certain grasses and native plants.

Use slow-release fertilizers.

Don’t fertilize just before a forecasted heavy rain storm.

Use commercially available compost or make your own using yard waste. Mixing compost with soil means your plants will need less chemical fertilizer and put your waste to good use.

What Can You Do?

Check your car often for oil and fluid drips and other leaks and fix them promptly.

Have your car regularly tuned-up to reduce oil use.

Use ground cloths or drip pans under your vehicle if you have leaks or are doing engine work.

Recycle used motor oil. Many auto supply stores, car-care centers and gas stations accept used oil. Some public works facilities also accept used oil.

Clean up spills immediately. You can use kitty litter or sand to soak up the liquid. Properly dispose of this material after the spill.

Collect all used oil in containers with tight-fitting lids. Do not mix waste oil with gasoline, solvents or other engine fluids. This contaminates the oil, which may otherwise be reused, and may form a more hazardous chemical.

Never dump motor oil, antifreeze, transmission fluid, or other engine fluids down storm gutters, into road gutters, on the ground, or into a ditch.

What is Polluted Stormwater Runoff?
When snow melts or it rains, water runs over roads, parking lots, sidewalks and lawns, removing oils and grease, sand and salt, tiny metal and soil particles, and fertilizers. This stormwater runoff and the pollutants it contains then flow directly into storm drainage systems. From there, it’s carried without treatment into our streams, ponds, reservoirs, Long Island Sound and Hudson River.

If we want to continue making progress, more effort is needed to control polluted stormwater runoff, such as by fixing any oil and other fluid leaks on our cars, reducing the amount of fertilizers we use, and washing our cars at commercial car washes where the water is recycled and/or filtered. And remember, don’t dump! Only rainwater should go down a storm drain, not used motor oil or pet waste.

Improving water quality is a priority of Westchester County Executive Andrew J. Spano and the Westchester County Board of Legislators. The Department of Planning, in partnership with the Soil and Water Conservation District, has advanced a number of initiatives to control polluted stormwater, including watershed planning, stormwater management and natural resources restoration projects, and public outreach and education. For more information, call (914)995-4400 or visit www.westchestergov.com/planning/environmental.

Clean streams, lakes, reservoirs and estuaries are important to all of us! But you don’t have to live near a stream or lake to affect their water quality. For example, spilled oil may eventually find its way there no matter where it’s spilled. The environmental impacts from polluted runoff are gradual, but severe. The cumulative effects of polluted stormwater runoff can make the water very unhealthy for fish, animals and people.

It’s up to all of us to keep our water resources clean. Polluted runoff can be reduced significantly if everyone incorporates small preventive measures into their regular everyday activities, such as properly disposing of pet waste or minimizing use of lawn fertilizers.

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What Can You Do?

Don’t bag grass clippings. Use a mulching lawn mower and naturally fertilize your lawn with the clippings.

Don’t fertilize just before a forecasted heavy rain storm.

Use commercially available compost or make your own using yard waste. Mixing compost with soil means your plants will need less chemical fertilizer and put your waste to good use.

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Help Clean Up Our Water Resources.

Black and white illustration of a car with the words "No Dumping!" and a message about protecting Long Island Sound. The illustration is part of a campaign emphasizing the importance of not dumping contaminants into storm drains.

The Westchester County Department of Planning and Soil and Water Conservation District wish to thank the Washington State Department of Ecology for these images, and Long Island Sound Study and New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission for sharing the brochure design.

Visit these web sites for information about polluted runoff:

- County of Westchester: www.westchestergov.com/waterquality
- Center for Watershed Protection: www.stormwatercenter.net
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps
- Center for Watershed Protection: www.westchestergov.com/waterquality
- County of Westchester: www.westchestergov.com/waterquality