

“Untreated stormwater runoff is the biggest threat to our nation’s water quality.”
-United States Environmental Protection Association

Stormwater runoff is rain or snow melt and water from things people do, such as over watering lawns or washing your cars on the driveway. As that water makes its way to the storm drains, it picks up pollution in its way, such as bacteria from pet waste, salt from winter road care, gas and oil from vehicles, grass clippings and sediment (dirt).

YES! Dirt, grass clippings and leaves are considered pollution! **When you think about the water quality, remember, anything in our water, that isn't water, is pollution!** These types of pollution contribute to algae blooms and dead zones - unsuitable homes for water dwelling creatures, and undesirable waters to recreate in.

With rising amounts of hard surfaces (concrete roads and parking lots) and pollution in our cities, it is important to realize **we** can make small changes at home to help improve local water quality!

Did you know that storm drains lead directly to our rivers and lakes? That means grass clippings, leaves, trash, sediment (dirt), and animal waste that gets into the storm drains are taken directly to our rivers and lakes.

The good news about stormwater is that YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

- **Scoop the Poop!**
 - You may be surprised to know pet waste is one of the largest ways bacteria and pathogens get into our water. Picking up after your dog, and encouraging neighbors to do the same, will keep large amounts of bacteria out of our waters!
- **Green – Our Least Favorite Color!**
 - Sweep grass clippings or leaves back into your lawn (or collect them as you cut!) to keep excess nutrients out of our water! Grass clipping contain large amounts of phosphorus and other nutrients – allowing algae blooms to blossom! Please, keep the green on your lawn so it doesn't end up in our water!
- **Protect the Bass, Wash Your Car in the Grass!**
 - Washing your vehicle on your lawn instead of in the driveway will allow all the soapy water, along with other pollutants from your vehicle, to soak into the ground and naturally clean itself as it travels through the soil and down to the water table.
- **Rain Barrels**
 - Collect rain water as it falls – 100% eliminating the chance of polluted stormwater runoff entering our water ways! Rain barrels collect water from your roof through the gutters and store the water for use at a later time. Use the water to water your lawn or garden, wash the car, or use this collected water for play on a hot summer day instead of running the hose! For more information on Rain Barrels, please contact Mariah Pace. **Please let all volunteers know that FWWA will be giving away one FREE rain barrel at the River Celebration!**
- **Flowers are Friends of the Water!**
 - Rain Gardens are a great, and beautiful way, to lessen your impact on stormwater! A rain garden is planted with native flowers and grasses and is planted in a depression where precipitation can pool and then soak into the ground instead of running off your property.

Encourage your volunteers to Make Their Choices Count! By spreading this knowledge and motivating your volunteers to take action at home - we can continue to make a difference *after* our River Cleanup. **Taking care of our waterways is EVERYONE'S responsibility and together, we can make huge improvements in Wisconsin's Waters!**

Renew Our Waters *Every choice counts.*

