



## What is the North Carolina Department of Transportation doing about Stormwater Pollution?

The N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has established a Highway Stormwater Program. This program, created in 1998, is designed to help reduce contaminants from North Carolina's Highways and Maintenance Facilities that can impair the water quality of rivers, lakes, streams and coastal waters. Contaminants can include sediments, oils, grease, fertilizers, and other small particles and fluids washed from surfaces during rainstorm events. In addition, the state's waterways can be polluted by contaminants dumped or discharged illegally onto NCDOT highways. As a part of the Highway Stormwater Program, NCDOT has established a program that allows citizens and NCDOT employees to monitor and report any sources of pollution along the roadsides.



The N. C. Department Of Transportation's methods are as simple as good housekeeping practices, similar to the ones you would use in your own home to separate hazardous chemicals and keep surfaces clean. NCDOT also constructs stormwater treatment devices that help settle and filter contaminants out of the water.



Pollution from human activities has rendered fish and shellfish in many North Carolina estuaries unfit for consumption.

### WHY SHOULD I CARE?

You may wonder why state government can't take care of stormwater pollution. Government can regulate wastewater discharges to streams and rivers, but it is difficult to regulate pollution that comes from millions of individuals over large areas of land. Citizens can help by learning how they can make a personal difference.



### How can I make a difference?

**When you're washing your car in the driveway, remember you're not just washing your car in the driveway.**



All the soap, scum and oily grit runs along the curb and then into the storm drain. This flows directly into our lakes, streams, rivers and coastal waters. And that causes pollution, which damages prime trout and nursery habitats. So how do you avoid this whole mess? Easy. Use less water and, if possible, wash your car on grass or gravel instead of the street. Or better yet, take it to a car wash where the water gets treated and recycled.

**When water lands on your roof, remember it doesn't just land on your roof.**



Most houses have rain gutters and downspouts, and many of these direct stormwater to a ditch, driveway or street where it flows into a nearby waterbody. So what can you do? Where possible, direct stormwater to lawn, garden or natural areas to promote soaking into the ground. Also, consider using a rain barrel to save water for dry weather.

One quart of oil can ruin the taste of 250,000 gallons of water.

**When you're fertilizing the lawn, remember you're not just fertilizing the lawn.**



If you fertilize before it rains, the rain washes the fertilizer along the curb, into the storm drain, and directly into our streams, rivers, lakes and coastal waters. This causes algae to grow, which uses up oxygen fish need to survive. So if you fertilize, please follow directions carefully and use sparingly. Don't apply fertilizer if you know it's going to rain.

**When your pet goes on the lawn, sidewalk or street, remember it doesn't just go on the lawn, sidewalk or street.**



When our pets leave those little surprises, rain washes all that pet waste into our storm drains, and then pollutes our waterways. So what to do? Simple. Pick up after your pet and dispose of it properly.

**When your car's leaking oil on the street, remember it's not just leaking oil on the street.**



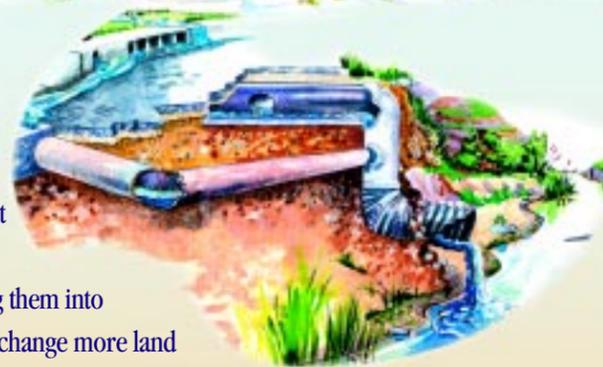
Leaking oil goes from car to street, and is washed from the street into the storm drain and into our waterways. Now imagine the number of cars in the area and you can imagine the amount of oil that finds its way from leaky gaskets into our water. So please, fix oil leaks.

## ***DID YOU KNOW?***

Water running off your property to a road, storm drain or ditch flows directly to a nearby stream, lake or coastal water. When it rains or snow falls on your street, roof or yard, it will eventually enter a river or creek. Many people are surprised to learn that the water goes directly into a river or stream, not to a wastewater treatment plant. We all know water running over land is a natural occurrence. The problem occurs when rainwater washes pollutants off the land and into streams. This water or runoff – the excess water from rain and snow – is often called stormwater. Pollutants that get picked up and carried away by stormwater include lawn fertilizers and pesticides, soil, pet and wildlife wastes, engine oil and other chemicals from streets and parking lots. All these pollutants make their way into the water we depend on for drinking and cooking and for recreational activities, such as swimming and fishing.

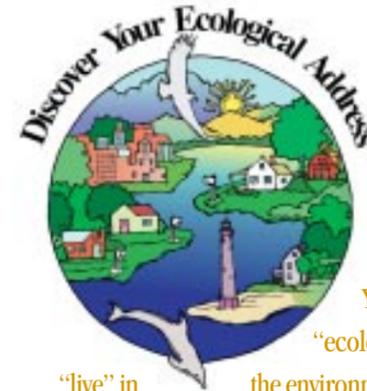


Much of North Carolina's land has changed from natural vegetation like trees and shrubs to surfaces that water cannot penetrate, like streets, highways, buildings and parking lots. Because the rainwater or stormwater cannot filter through hard surfaces, it moves quickly across these surfaces, picking up pollutants along the way and carrying them into our streams and rivers. As our population grows and we change more land into housing developments and shopping centers, the amount of polluted stormwater entering our streams and rivers increases. This results in increased erosion of stream banks and increased flooding.



## ***Other things you can do to help:***

When traveling on state roads, report any suspicious material you observe on the road or in ditches along the side of roadways. There may be pipes flowing into these ditches that indicate possible pollution sources by having a strong color or odor. You can report these activities by calling 1-877DOT4YOU.



### ***Did you know that you live in a river basin?***

A river basin is the land that water flows across on its way to a river and then out to sea.

Your river basin is part of your "ecological address" or where you "live" in the environment. Knowing your ecological address also means you understand how your local environment affects you, and how you affect your local environment. Everything we do - both good or bad, has an impact on the water, plants and animals in our river basins and therefore has an impact on our health and our way of life.

## ***TO FIND OUT MORE...***

These are just a few things you can do to help prevent polluted stormwater runoff from reaching our rivers, lakes, streams and coastal waters. Please call 1-877DOT4YOU or visit our websites <http://www.doh.dot.state.nc.us/preconstruct/highway/hydro/> or [http://www.doh.dot.state.nc.us/operations/dp\\_chief\\_eng/roadside/](http://www.doh.dot.state.nc.us/operations/dp_chief_eng/roadside/).

Find out more about your ecological address, including what river basin you live in, by going to <http://www.ee.enr.state.nc.us/ecoadr/ecoadr.htm>, or call the Office of Environmental Education 919-733-0711.

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# **POLLUTION... What's Our Connection ?**

