

Checklist for Clean Water

- ___ Minimize the use of polluting fertilizers and pesticides or use nonpolluting alternatives
- ___ Reduce the amount of lawn and pavement (create gardens, no mow areas and meadows because water runoff over grass is close to that over pavement)
- ___ Plant groundcover and trees to prevent soil erosion
- ___ Compost leaves and grass clippings
- ___ Keep a buffer along any stream on your property
- ___ If you have a pet, use a pooper-scooper and dispose of waste properly
- ___ Pump your septic tank regularly
- ___ Check your driveway or garage for leaks from your car
- ___ Prevent objects or fluids from draining into stormwater grates or inlets
- ___ Take hazardous substances to a proper disposal repository
- ___ Do not litter with plastic bags, cups and candy wrappers (please recycle instead)

For more information on Nonpoint Source Pollution
visit www.cleanwaterNJ.org

What is Nonpoint Source Pollution?

Nonpoint source (NPS) pollution is a technical name for a very simple thing: pollution from runoff created when it rains.

Polluted runoff contains many harmful toxins that go directly into our water supply. Often referred to as "people pollution", nonpoint source pollution results from everyday occurrences such as the following: use of lawn fertilizers containing weed killers (herbicides); indiscriminate use of pesticides for spraying trees, lawns and gardens; walking pets without a pooper-scooper; discarding motor oil directly into the environment; and wanton littering. With each rainfall, pollutants generated by these activities are washed from streets and lawns into storm water drains that flow into our waterways and the ocean.



States report that nonpoint source pollution is the leading remaining cause of water quality problems. These pollutants have harmful effects on drinking water supplies, recreation, fisheries, and wildlife. In New Jersey, over 50% of water pollution is from nonpoint sources!

So what can you do?

FOUR CRITICAL AREAS

LAWNS

Fertilizers and pesticides used on lawns and gardens are a significant source of water pollution. Fertilizer runoff contributes to unwanted bacterial and algae growth in nearby streams or lakes and an oxygen-robbing process called eutrophication. Pesticides are designed to kill "pests", but are also dangerous to humans and the environment.

Use nonpolluting alternatives:

- For fertilizer, compost is excellent for vegetable and flower gardens. Well-rotted animal manures are also excellent, but keep manures away from water sources.
- For pesticides, use biological pest control, which includes the use of insects, bacteria or plants to repel pests. Ladybugs and praying mantis are examples of helpful bugs that eat pests. Natural bacteria, such as milky spore, can kill Japanese beetle grub. Companion plants can be used to deter bugs. Marigolds, for example, will repel beetles, whitefly, and tomato hornworm.

If all else fails and you must use pesticides:

- Be sure to read and follow label instructions
- Apply only to infected plants; spot treat
- Mix only what you need and do not over-apply chemicals
- Do not apply pesticides near a pond, stream bed, or well
- NEVER pour leftover pesticides down sinks, storm drains, or sewers

If you use a Lawn Service, ask them to:

- Check your lawn for specific problems and treat only when problems exist
- Spot-treat whenever possible
- Use natural organic fertilizers
- Let you know if they expect to apply pesticides so you can take personal protection measures
- Use Integrated Pest Management practices (an effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management)

PETS

When animal waste is deposited along roadways or near waterways, it can quickly find its way into nearby streams and lakes.

- Pick up after your pet
- Dispose of waste in the trash or toilet
- Use a pooper-scooper and encourage your neighbors to do so
- Do not feed ducks, geese, gulls or other water animals because feeding encourages them to stay and overpopulate the area, thus contributing to water quality problems

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Septic systems are designed for the treatment of sanitary waste, not for the disposal of household waste or chemicals. Household wastewater from sinks, toilets, soap and human wastes flows "down the drain" carrying disease-causing bacteria, viruses and other pathogens.

- Pump septic systems on a regular basis, usually every 2 to 3 years
- Use water-conserving fixtures and practices
- Spread major water uses like laundry out over the week; do no more than 2 loads of wash per day
- Keep vehicles and other heavy objects away from disposal field
- Plant grass or shallow-rooted plants over the disposal field

CARS

Motor oil and antifreeze are hazardous chemicals that are toxic and can be fatal when ingested. Pets, children and wildlife are attracted to spilled antifreeze because of its sweet taste.

- Maintain your vehicle so toxic fluids do not leak
- NEVER dispose of any hazardous materials or wastes in storm or home drains