

## **WATER**

**"EVERY DROP YOU LOSE, NATURE FINDS"**

### **Help Prevent Stormwater Pollution**

#### **POLUTION SOURCES—PET WASTE**

Not MY Pet! My pet can't be part of a water pollution problem. My pet is a member of our family. He watches TV with me and sleeps on my lap!

Of course, it's not your pet alone, and sure, you keep your pet clean. The pollution results when we add all of our pets together.

Pet waste is a major source of bacteria and excess nutrients in our local waters. When walking your pet, remember to pick up the waste and dispose of it properly. Flushing pet waste is the best disposal method. Pet waste should be picked up and placed in a bag, sealed, and put in the trash receptacle. Leaving pet waste on the ground increases public health risks by allowing harmful bacteria and nutrients to wash into the storm drain and eventually into local waterbodies.

#### **SO WHY PICK ON DOGS?**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports from their studies that 2-3 days' worth of pet waste from just 100 dogs in a 20 sq. mile area can contribute enough bacteria to temporarily close a bay to swimming and shell fishing. Dogs present a special problem since they are built to eat almost anything; they have an especially large number of intestinal bacteria to digest that wide variety of food.

Dogs have 23,000,000 grams of intestinal bacteria compared to cows - 230,000, horses -12,600, Wild Rabbits - 20, and mice—330,000. Yes, there are animals in nature that create waste. We can't control the disposal of their waste but WE CAN take responsibility for the disposal of our pet's waste. We shouldn't ignore what we can control. Let's all work to do our part to prevent water pollution.

#### **PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE DISPOSAL**

What is the proper disposal method for expired, unused or excess prescription drugs from the home? This issue of drug disposal is gaining recent attention, given some studies that have been done on water contamination from flushing drugs down the drain. From a regulatory standpoint, personal medications disposed of from a home are not regulated by Ohio EPA as a hazardous waste.

## **SEVEN STEPS TO SAFELY DISPOSE OF PRESCRIPTION & OVER-THE COUNTER DRUGS FROM THE E.P.A.**

Please use these practical guidelines when disposing of prescription and over-the-counter medicines:

### **For Pills & Liquids:**

1. Keep the medicines in the original container. This will help identify the contents if they are accidentally ingested.
2. Mark out your name and prescription number for safety.
3. For pills: add some water or soda to start dissolving them. For liquids: add something inedible like cat litter, dirt, or cayenne pepper.
4. Close the lid and secure with duct or packing tape.
5. Place the bottle(s) inside an opaque (non see-through) container like a coffee can or plastic laundry bottle.
6. Tape the container closed.
7. Hide the container in the trash. Do not put in the recycle bin.

**DO NOT** give the drugs to anyone else.

**NEVER** flush drugs down the toilet

**DO NOT** put drugs in the trash without disguising them—human or animal scavengers may find them and misuse them.

### **FERTILIZING YOUR YARD—LESS IS BEST!**

Excess fertilizers and pesticides applied to lawns and gardens wash off and pollute streams. In addition, yard clippings and leaves can wash into storm drains and contribute nutrients and organic matter to streams.

Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly. When use is necessary, use these chemicals in

recommended amounts. Use organic mulch or safer pest control methods whenever possible.

**READ THE LABEL.** The best place to start with fertilizer use is to read the label. All bags of

fertilizer have three numbers on them (i.e. 15-0-15) The first number is the percentage of

nitrogen, the second is phosphorus and the third is potassium.

Choose lawn fertilizer that is very low in phosphorus. Zero is even better. Phosphorus is

causing serious problems and is expensive to remove once it gets into the water.

It is actually okay not to fertilize at all and it certainly isn't necessary to fertilize routinely. Most

lawns can draw the nutrients they need from clippings that fall back into the grass after mowing.

Don't overwater your lawn. Consider using a soaker hose instead of a sprinkler.

Compost or mulch yard waste.

**Do not sweep or blow grass clippings into the street or sweep them into storm drains or streams.**

Cover piles of dirt or mulch being used in landscaping projects.

**AUTO CARE:**

**WASHING**

**CHANGING FLUIDS**

Washing your car and degreasing auto parts at home can send detergents and other contaminants through the storm sewer system. Dumping automotive fluids into storm drains has the same result as dumping the materials directly into a waterbody.

Use a commercial car wash that treats or recycles its wastewater OR wash your car on your yard so the water infiltrates into the ground.

Repair leaks and dispose of used auto fluids and batteries at designated drop-off or recycling locations—DO NOT dump into storm drains.

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### **RAIN BARRELS & RAIN GARDENS**

Almost every home owner has occasionally been stumped about what to do with excess water washing across the yard during and after a rainstorm.

Rain barrels can be used to collect rainwater from rooftops in mosquito-proof containers. The water can be used later on lawn or garden areas.

A rain garden is a specially landscaped area designed to capture and hold excess water for a short period allowing it to soak into the soil. The garden is planted with vegetation (i.e. violets, canna lily, black-eyed Susan, ferns) that prefers a slightly wetter environment but can tolerate dry times too. Rain gardens are easy to maintain and many plants attract birds and other wildlife. Villages have more roofs, driveways, lawns, & highways and the water that once filtered into the underground water supplies now runs to the nearest storm drains. Rain gardens & rain barrels are becoming more popular because they provide a place for the water to "rest" while it is absorbed.