

Town of Leesburg

Department Of Public Works

STORM DRAIN MARKER PROGRAM

WALK THE WALK – TALK THE TALK

As you go out in your community to mark storm drain inlets, it's also important to understand why this is needed and the effects stormwater can have on our natural environment. As a team or group leader, here is some information to share with participants:

What is stormwater?

Stormwater is precipitation (rain, sleet, snow, melting snow, etc.) that washes over land and through the storm sewer system and back into natural waterways such as streams, creeks, rivers, etc.

What's the difference between the storm sewer and sanitary sewer systems?

In Leesburg, the water inside homes and businesses is directed into the sanitary sewer system. This water is carried through a series of pipes to the Town's Wastewater treatment Facility, where it is cleaned and purified before being released back into the environment. On the other hand, the storm sewer system is a series of pipes that carries ground water – the water outside your home or business – directly into the environment. This water is NOT treated first! That's why it is so important to keep pollutants out of the storm sewer system.

Where does stormwater pollution come from?

Stormwater pollution can come from many sources – especially man-made ones. Below are just some of the pollutants that can be found in stormwater:

- ✓ **Pet Waste:** pet waste contributes excessive nutrients and harmful bacteria to water carried through the storm drain system. This tainted water ends up downstream and can cause algae blooms (from too much nitrogen) in ponds and can also make other animals and humans quite ill.
- ✓ **Fertilizers, Herbicides, Pesticides:** spring is a particularly active time of year for these pollutants to enter into waterway. Excessive fertilizer and improperly used lawn and garden chemicals can be washed into the storm sewer system through spring showers. These chemicals cause an imbalance downstream and can also be toxic to other plants, animals and humans.
- ✓ **Automotive Fluids:** Used motor oil, antifreeze and other auto fluids are highly toxic. When washed into the storm drain system these chemicals can kill plants, animals, fish and other wildlife downstream. They are also poisonous to humans as well.
- ✓ **Paint and Cleaners:** Even latex/water-based paints and stains cause problems downstream. These materials should be stored securely and disposed of at a proper location. Never wash paints and cleaners into storm drains or clean brushes and pans near inlets.

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- ✓ **Yard Waste:** Although it is natural material and biodegradable, yard waste doesn't belong in a storm drain! Grass clippings, garden waste and leaves all contain high amounts of nutrients – when these get washed into storm drains they bring those excess nutrients to waterways downstream. They can also clog the drains and cause flooding in neighborhoods. Never blow or sweep leaves or grass clippings into storm drains!
- ✓ **Trash and Litter:** plastic 6-pack holders can cause strangulation in animals and birds. Litter can clog drains causing localized flooding and is an unsightly addition to streams, creeks and rivers.

What can I do to prevent stormwater pollution?

- ✓ Always scoop the poop! Clean up after pets in your yard and when out for walks. Flush poop down the toilet or place in baggies in a trash can. Never leave it on the ground.
- ✓ Store and dispose of paints, chemicals, cleaners and toxics properly. Make sure containers don't leak, clean up spills immediately with dry materials and never hose these pollutants into a storm drain inlet! Take advantage of free household hazardous waste events throughout the year for safe disposal of used or unwanted materials.
- ✓ Compost yard waste and leaves or bag and place out for recycling. Never direct leaves, debris or grass clippings into the storm sewer system.
- ✓ Take auto fluids to a shop or the Loudoun County Landfill for safe disposal. The Landfill accepts used oil and antifreeze as well as car batteries year round for free.
- ✓ Don't be a litterbug! Throw trash and recycling away in their proper locations. Recycle as much as you can and make sure trash and litter don't find their way into the storm sewer system.

REMEMBER – ONLY RAIN DOWN THE DRAIN

What Goes in Here...



Ends Up in Here...



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