

MS4 Corner: Protecting Our Watershed

The Township's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)-regulated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) collects stormwater runoff, conveys the water through a system of pipes and swales, and then discharges it to surface waters. As a Township resident there are simple steps you can take to protect the local watershed by preventing pollutants from entering the MS4.

Protecting Our Watershed: Stormwater Friendly Landscaping

Summer thunderstorms can make a mess of your yard and as well as local waterways. The following tips will help keep your lawn looking its best while also protecting the water quality of our streams and rivers.

Keep yard debris out of stormwater inlets and streams.

Compost your grass clippings and leaves or dispose of yard debris during the Township's curbside pick-up days. Yard waste that washes into stormwater inlets gets discharged into local streams where it contributes to algal growth, making the water green and smelly, and decreases the oxygen needed for aquatic life.

Landscape with deep-rooted native plants or trees.

The roots of turf grass extend only two to three inches into the soil, giving it little ability to hang on during high velocity water flows. The root systems of native flowers and grasses are much deeper and acts as anchors that keep the plants and surrounding soil from washing away. Native plants also increase the amount of water



the soil can absorb, meaning that more water sinks in to recharge groundwater aquifers and less ends up in the storm drain.

Maintain a healthy un-mowed buffer along streams and wetlands.

If you live along a stream or wetland, an-un-mowed stream bank buffer vegetated with native plants and trees will hold the soil in place when it rains. Buffers also catch and filter many of the pollutants that can be found in melting snow and stormwater runoff.

Keep flood-prone areas of your yard free from debris and obstructions.

Rain storms can create standing water and temporary streams that wash loose dirt and debris out of your yard. Debris carried by stormwater washes into the storm sewer system where it can clog pipes, cause flooding, or be carried downstream into local waterways.

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Protecting Our Watershed: Pet Waste Disposal

Pet waste is more than smelly and unsightly – it is a health risk to pets and people, and our local waterways.

When it rains, pet waste left on sidewalks and grassy areas can be washed into the stormwater inlets that discharge to local streams and rivers. The bacteria, parasites and viruses in pet waste degrade water quality and can cause people who unknowingly swim or fish in a contaminated waterway to become sick.

Additionally, the nutrients in pet waste cause harmful algae and aquatic weeds to grow. Not only does the excess algae growth make the water green and unsightly, it also decreases the oxygen needed for aquatic life.



Do your part to keep our waterways clean and healthy.

- ❖ **Always** carry a plastic bag while walking your dog.
- ❖ Dispose of pet waste bags **in the trash**.
- ❖ **Never dispose of pet waste in a storm drain** as they drain directly to our streams and rivers.