

Stormwater...*What is it & Why is it a Problem??*

Stormwater is water from rain or melting snow that does not soak into the ground. It flows from rooftops, over paved areas, bare soil, and sloped lawns. As it flows, stormwater runoff collects and transports soil, animal waste, salt, pesticides, fertilizers, oil and grease, debris and other potential pollutants.

Rain and snowmelt wash pollutants from streets, construction sites, and land into storm sewers and ditches. Eventually, the storm sewers and ditches empty the polluted stormwater directly into streams and rivers with no treatment. This is known as stormwater pollution.

Polluted stormwater runoff can have many adverse effects on plants, fish, animals, and people.

- Sediment can cloud the water and make it difficult or impossible for aquatic plants to grow. Sediment also can destroy aquatic habitats
- Excess nutrients can cause algae blooms. When algae die, they sink to the bottom and decompose in a process that removes oxygen from the water. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't exist in water with low dissolved oxygen levels.
- Bacteria and other pathogens can wash into swimming areas and create health hazards, often making beach closures necessary.
- Debris - plastic bags, six-pack rings, bottles, and cigarette butts - washed into waterways can choke, suffocate, or disable aquatic life such as ducks, fish, turtles, and birds.
- Household wastes such as insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil, and other auto fluids can poison aquatic life. Land animals and people can become sick or die from eating diseased fish and shellfish or from ingesting polluted water.

If you suspect stormwater pollution is occurring in your neighborhood, please contact Matt Fischione at (716) 684-4171