

What is IDOT Doing to Reduce Stormwater Runoff Pollution?

IDOT ensures that highway construction projects and highway separate storm sewer systems in urbanized areas comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). This is a permitting program, under the Federal Clean Water Act, which regulates construction, industrial activities and both large and small metropolitan separate storm sewer systems to reduce the discharge of pollutants into waters of the United States. Whenever an acre or more of ground is disturbed for roadwork, it is IDOT's responsibility to implement measures to control the discharge of sediment and other pollutants into nearby rivers, streams and wetlands. This is done through the use of an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, which implements a variety of temporary and permanent measures (e.g. perimeter silt fence, ditch checks, temporary and permanent seeding) to prevent soil and other pollutants from leaving the construction site. IDOT teaches classes concerning erosion and sediment control to local agencies, consultants, contractors, and its own personnel. The department has an Adopt-A-Highway Program that allows local community groups to pick up litter from our highways. All IDOT staff responsible for the application of herbicides are trained and licensed by the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA), and all chemicals are stored in compliance with the IDOA's regulations.

Who Can I Contact for More Information on Controlling Water Pollution?

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
<http://www.epa.state.il.us>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
<http://www.epa.gov>

University of Illinois Extension
<http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/extension/natures.asp>

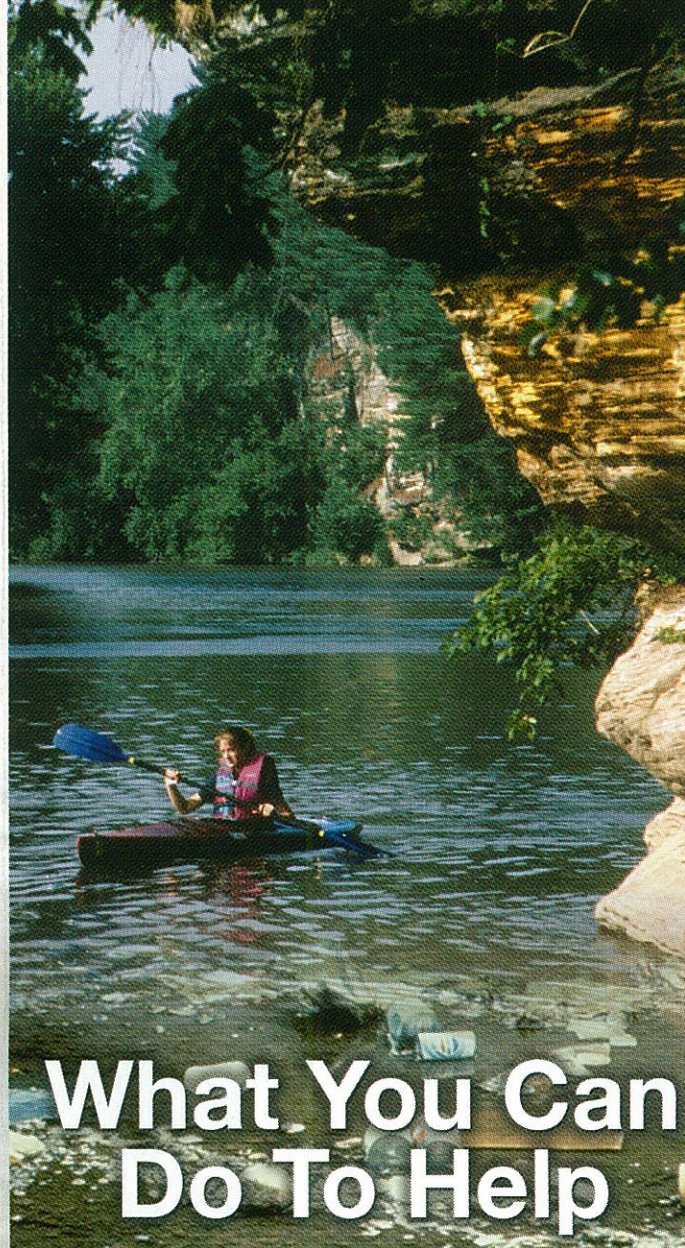


**Illinois Department
of Transportation**



Printed by authority of the State of Illinois 4/04

STORMWATER RUNOFF POLLUTION



What You Can Do To Help

Stormwater Runoff Pollution

Over the past 25 years, the United States has made tremendous advances to clean up our nation's waterways by controlling pollution from industrial and sewage treatment plants. However, little has been done to address the effects of stormwater runoff pollution.

Stormwater runoff pollution is a leading cause of water quality problems. Nonpoint Source Pollution (NPS) is the primary reason many of our waters are still considered unfit for swimming and fishing. NPS pollution is caused by the everyday impacts of individuals interacting with the land. Each of us can contribute to this problem without even realizing it. Stormwater runoff pollution, unlike pollution from industry and sewage treatment plants, can come from a number of sources.

This type of pollution is caused by rainfall and snowmelt moving across and through the ground picking up pollutants along the way and depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands and our underground source of drinking water. Fortunately there are many ways in which we can all help to lower the amount of pollutants reaching our waterways and ground water.

Things You Can Do To Reduce Stormwater Runoff Pollution

- **Don't litter.** Litter adversely affects water, plants and animals.
- **Do not dump pollutants down a storm drain.** Motor oil, grease, gas, paint, paint thinner and other household chemicals are all pollutants. These chemicals can be devastating to fish and wildlife in and around our waterways.
- **Dispose of hazardous household chemicals properly.** Many communities have hazardous waste collection centers.
- **Take your car to the car wash instead of washing it in the driveway.** Cleaning chemicals are pollutants and the car wash has the means of properly disposing of the waste water.
- **Properly clean up and dispose of vehicle fluids and household chemicals.** This especially includes any spillage or leakage that may have occurred.
- **Participate in community hazardous waste disposal days.** Many communities have several days out of the year when citizens can bring hazardous waste to have them disposed of properly. These include, but are not limited to, paint, oil and household chemicals.



- **Use fertilizers and herbicides sparingly.** A light rainfall can cause these chemicals to runoff your lawn or garden into a storm sewer system.
- **Have your septic tank pumped and inspected regularly.** Faulty systems can leak contaminants into surface water.
- **Pick up after your pets.** Pet waste contains nutrients and pathogens that can contaminate surface water.
- **Recycle electronics and appliances.** Items, such as computers and refrigerators, can contain pollutants, including lead and freon.
- **Direct gutter downspouts away from driveways and bare soil areas.** This will prevent debris and sediment from washing into storm sewers.
- **Help prevent erosion.** Revegetate or mulch any exposed soil as soon as possible.
- **Participate in community clean up days.**
- **Help educate people in your community.** Get your community groups involved.