

## Stormwater Pollution

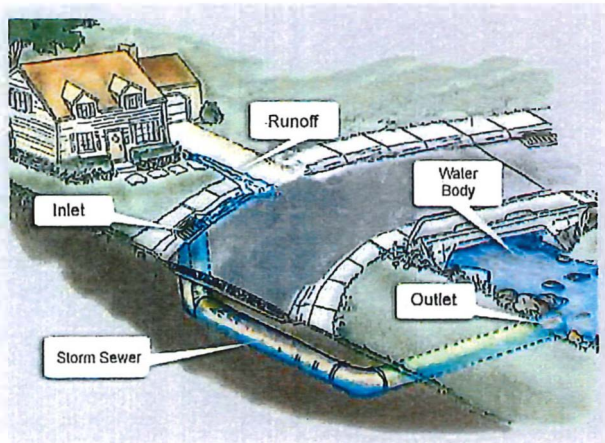
Polluted stormwater degrades our lakes, rivers, wetlands and other waterways. Nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen can promote the overgrowth of algae and deplete oxygen. Toxic fluids from automobiles and careless application of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers threaten water quality and can kill fish and other aquatic life. Bacteria from animal wastes and improper sanitary sewer connections to storm sewer systems can make lakes and waterways unsafe for wading, swimming, and fish consumption. Eroded soil is a pollutant as well. It clouds the waterway and destroys the habitats of fish and plants.



Terra Erosion Control, Ltd.

# Illicit Stormwater Discharges

## Identifying & Preventing Stormwater Pollution In Your Neighborhood



Bronx River Alliance



**City of Anna Maria**  
**P.O. Box 779**  
**10005 Gulf Drive**  
**Anna Maria, FL 34216**



Illicit Discharge

Prince William County, VA

## Stormwater Runoff

Stormwater runoff is water from rain or melting snow that does not soak into the ground. It flows from rooftops, paved areas, bare soil, and lawns into storm drains or ditches. Storm sewers and ditches collect stormwater runoff and empty it directly to local bodies of water.

Ideally, stormwater runoff would be free of contaminants. In reality, it picks up pollutants such as animal waste, pesticides, fertilizers, salt, oil and grease, soil and debris and transports them to waterways where they are discharged with no treatment. This is stormwater pollution.

You can identify a storm sewer by the open grates along roadways and within some low-lying areas.



Millers River Watershed Council

## What is an “Illicit Discharge?”

An illicit (illegal) discharge is any discharge to a municipal storm sewer system – storm drains, pipes, and ditches – that is not composed entirely of stormwater. Pollutants end up in storm sewer systems in a number of ways, many of which are easily preventable. In some instances, companies or residences have waste pipes tapped into stormwater pipes. In other cases, individuals use the storm drain inlets to dispose of various types of waste. Disposal of anything other than stormwater in storm sewers is illegal!

**Storm sewer systems cannot treat polluted water. Stormwater doesn't get carried to the wastewater treatment plant. Storm sewers transport rain water and everything in it directly to surrounding rivers, streams, lakes, and other bodies of water.**

## Examples of Illicit Discharges

- Septic Tank Seepage / Illegal Sanitary Connections
- Laundry Wastewater / Detergent
- Improper Waste Oil Disposal / Auto Fluids Flushing
- Home Improvement Waste (e.g. concrete, paint)
- Pesticides and Fertilizers
- Improper Disposal of Commercial and Industrial Hazardous Waste
- Pool / Spa Discharge
- Cooking Grease / Household Waste

## Signs of an Illicit Discharge

The point in a storm sewer system where it empties into a body of water is a storm sewer outfall. It may be a pipe or ditch. If the outfall is flowing when there has been no recent rainfall, this may indicate an illicit discharge. Visible sewage waste, foul odor, suds or other evidence of contamination, are indicators that an illicit discharge is contaminating the storm sewer.



City of Portage, Michigan

## Things You Can Do to Protect Water Quality

- Never dump anything down storm drains
- Use lawn and garden chemicals sparingly; sweep up any excess from driveways, sidewalks and roads
- Repair vehicle leaks; cover spilled fluids with kitty litter then sweep into household waste
- Pick up after your pet and dispose of properly
- Control soil erosion on your property by planting ground cover and stabilizing erosion-prone areas
- Keep grass clippings, leaves, litter, and debris out of street gutters and storm drains
- Direct downspouts onto grassy areas away from paved surfaces
- Use a commercial car wash or wash your vehicle on the grass instead of the driveway
- Dispose of used oil, antifreeze, paints and other household chemicals in an approved manner

**Keep an eye out for inappropriate (“illicit”) amounts of discharge from stormwater pipes, especially during dry weather. This could be a sign that there is a problem, and should be reported to your local municipality.**