

Non-Point Source Pollution

In recent years, “point sources” of water pollution like sewer outfalls and/or industrial wastes from factories have been greatly reduced. Now, the number one water pollution problem comes from “non-point sources,” things like abandoned mine drainage, cars leaking oil, fertilizers washing off fields, lawns and gardens, and failing septic tanks.

Non-point source pollution is often the direct result of our daily activities. Therefore, each and every one of us can help to reduce the amount of pollution entering our waterways. The following is a **partial** list of non-point source pollutants, their sources and tips to help us protect our streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands and ground waters:

TYPE OF NON-POINT SOURCE POLLUTION	COMMON POLLUTANT(S)	SOURCE(S) OF POLLUTION	TIP(S) FOR PREVENTION
1. Stormwater Runoff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sediment • Chemicals • Pesticides • Herbicides • Fertilizers • Trash • Oil • Grease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Lawns • Impervious Surfaces (roofs, parking lots, driveways) • Construction Sites • Combined Sewer & Stormwater lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize impervious surfaces (use gravel instead of cement for driveways, make sidewalks narrower, etc.) • Create buffer strips (leave vegetated areas along waterways) • Use erosion controls on construction sites (silt fence, hay bales, re-seed bare areas)
2. Lawn Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nitrogen • Phosphorous • Metals • Organics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pesticides • Herbicides • Fertilizers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test soil before you fertilize • Follow directions carefully when applying any chemicals and/or fertilizers • Don't over water • Use compost & mulch • Plant native species • Increase mower height
3. Sewage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bacteria • Pathogens • Nutrients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combined sewage & stormwater lines • Malfunctioning home septic systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor & maintain home septic systems (fix leaks, pump solids every 3-5 years) • Proper installation of new septic systems • Separate sewage from stormwater
4. Home Auto Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil • Grease • Anti-freeze • Gasoline • Brake/steering fluids • Detergents • Paint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auto leaks • Improper disposal • Poor maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade in batteries • Clean-up spills/leaks • Check for & repair leaks • Proper storage • Recycle oil* <p>*1 quart of motor oil in a storm sewer creates a 2 acre oil slick!</p>
5. Household Hazardous Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ammonia • Phosphorous • Acids • Chlorine • Solvents • Aerosols • Organics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paints • Varnishes • Thinners • Pool Chemicals • Cleaning Products • Insecticides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use environmentally safe products • Properly use & disposal of any products • Buy less

Non-point source pollution degrades our waterways and therefore reduces tourism, recreation, property values, community pride and potable water.

The government is helping to reduce the amount of non-point source pollution by enforcing regulations regarding erosion and sediment pollution controls, supporting local watershed efforts and offering grant money as a financial incentive for the installation of best management practices (structural or non-structural items/practices installed to help prevent or reduce the amount of non-point source pollution entering waterways). Best management practices can include things like riparian buffers, streambank fencing, grassed waterways, etc.

Citizens and communities can help to reduce non-point source pollution by organizing and supporting local watershed groups, educating others to increase awareness, assessing local watersheds and developing watershed management plans, partnering to complete restoration projects, being proactive and encouraging the wise use of resources.