

Community Partners for Clean Streams Monthly eMonitor



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Up Front



The eMonitor is designed to keep our Partners and friends updated on CPCS, stormwater management issues, provide helpful information to reduce stormwater and nonpoint source pollution, recognize new Partners, highlight upcoming events, and create networking opportunities. We hope you enjoy each edition of the Monthly eMonitor and welcome any comments, concerns, or suggestions.

Linking Stormwater Pollution and Drinking Water

Non-point source pollution refers to substances that do not originate from a specific source, but rather from an undefined geographic area. Stormwater is considered a non-point source because when it rains, it picks up dirt, trash, oil, gas, pesticides, fertilizers and many others substances as it travels our roads, driveways, rooftops and parking lots. This polluted water is carried into the storm drain without being filtered or otherwise treated before it reaches the nearest waterway.



Polluted stormwater contributes the majority of pollution in our waterways. Whether your drinking water comes from a well or municipal hook-up, it can be adversely affected by polluted stormwater runoff. According to the EPA, 77 of 127 priority pollutants were detected in stormwater runoff. Surface and groundwater sources are vulnerable to this type of pollution also and the most effective manner to deal with it is through prevention. Additionally, polluted runoff has been shown to be problematic for aquatic ecosystems resulting in fish kills, eutrophication (pond and lake degradation) and increased water temperatures and salinity.

This issue of the eMonitor will explain the link between stormwater and drinking water as well as some of the steps that you can take to protect water quality at your place of business and in your neighborhood.



Where Does Drinking Water Come from?

Most urban areas use surface water for their primary drinking water source. Surface water refers to lakes, rivers, streams, any water body that is not under ground. In more rural areas, residents and businesses typically obtain drinking water through a groundwater fed well. Residents and businesses in Ann Arbor are connected to the municipal water system that obtains water from the Huron River as well as groundwater aquifers.

The water obtained from surface water sources is treated prior to delivery, but most treatment plants are unable to remove all possible contaminants such as chemicals found in personal care and pharmaceutical products. Keeping stormwater as clean as possible prevents pollutants from entering local waterways, and reduces potential problems with contaminant removal at drinking water filtration plants.

Well water is particularly susceptible to chemicals that are released into the environment because it is typically not subjected to the same level of treatment as municipal water before it reaches the tap. Agricultural chemicals such as fertilizers, pesticides and other contaminants are often found in well water. Well owners are encouraged to test their own wells for contaminants, though testing does not always occur on a regular basis. This further indicates the importance of protecting the quality of both surface and ground water sources as they are used for drinking water in Washtenaw County and surrounding areas.

Water Quality Quick Facts:

- Average water use for a single-family home is 101 gallons per person each day!
- According to the EPA, methods to improve drinking water have been recorded as early as 4000 B.C.
- In 1999, the USGS detected one or more pesticides in 99% of US urban stream samples.
- The American Water Works Association notes that only 3% of tap water used on a typical day is for drinking water – the rest is used for bathing, toilets, outdoor uses, etc.

Keep Drinking Water Clean

One of our main objectives at Community Partners for Clean Streams is to help businesses to find ways to improve water quality. The most effective and efficient way to do this is to reduce pollutants entering the stormdrains and eventually in our drinking water.

Outdoor housekeeping and other activities are perhaps the greatest input of pollutants into local waterways. Fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, deicers, cleaning agents, vehicle fluids and other chemicals can wash right off the landscape and into a stormdrain, where it flows straight to the nearest waterway without treatment. The end result of reducing your use of landscaping chemicals, minimizing use of deicers and cleaners, trash pick up and being committed to regular vehicle maintenance will help keep drinking water clean!

Many small actions from our daily lives can protect drinking water quality. See some of these items below in the "Drinking Water Week" section.



CPCS News

National Drinking Water Week May 6-12, 2007



The American Water Works Association is hosting an informational campaign about drinking water and how it affects communities during Drinking Water Week. You can join in the festivities at your business at any time during the year! Some easy actions you can take are listed below:

- Conserve water at your place of business – encourage your employees to use less tap water during hand washing and other activities – contact CPCS for signs to post near sinks and in restrooms. Watering landscapes sparingly and calibrating sprinkler systems properly also conserves significant amounts of water.
- Prevent Pollution from entering stormdrains or contaminating groundwater. Reduce or eliminate pesticide and fertilizer use, eliminate vehicle leaks, avoid power washing and reduce the amount of deicer used in the winter.
- Contact CPCS for more information about what your business and employees can do to protect Washtenaw County waterways.

RiverSafe Homes is Here!

The RiverSafe Homes Program has arrived! The Drain Commissioner's Office has launched our newest water quality program, RiverSafe Homes. This program provides homeowner's the opportunity to protect local and regional water quality by providing information and defining simple steps to protect water quality at home.

Homeowner's can go to the online survey and answer a few simple questions about water quality practices. Upon completion they will receive a marker of their choice, as shown at right, to affix to a location outside their home. This marker will tell visitors that they are taking steps to protect Washtenaw County waterways. Go to www.ewashtenaw.org/riversafe to see the booklet and survey for yourself!

Protection of water quality can occur in all aspects of our lives. Businesses may want to consider encouraging employees who are Washtenaw County residents to enroll in this cost free program.



CPCS News

Events

Waste Knot Awards: April 24, 2007 – Weber's hosted the annual Waste Knot Awards in which the CPCS display was presented.

FOG Workshop: May 15, 2007 – CPCS will present information about our FOG program for the Detroit Water and Sewer Authority at Lawrence Tech University in Southfield.

Huron River Day: July 15, 2007 - This annual event includes fun for the whole family! Community Partners for Clean Streams will be hosting a table and children's event. Stop by and visit us!



New and Renewing Community Partners

New Partners

Barrett Paving Materials – Pleasant Lake Road Facility and Wagner Road Facility

Renewing Partners

Barrett Paving Materials – Cherry Hill Facility

Brentwood Square Condominiums

Huron Chase Association

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