

October 2010 eMonitor

A Publication of the Washtenaw
County Water Resources
Commissioner's Office

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Water Resources Commissioner



This Month

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Welcome to the Community
Partners Monthly eMonitor

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Catch Basin Care

Tips of the Month

Keeping Catch Basins
Clean

Partner Spotlight

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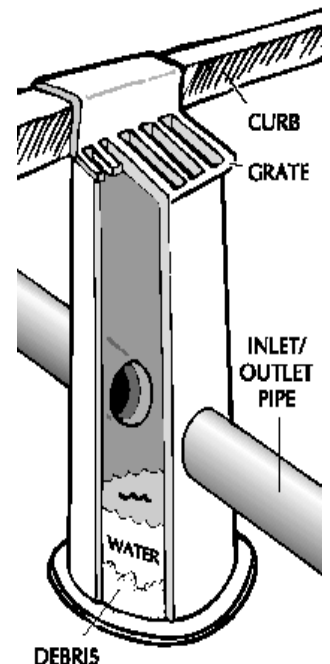
Up Front

This issue of the eMonitor is all about catch basins, maintenance tips, jurisdiction, and how these components all relate to stormwater management. The eMonitor is designed to keep our Partners and friends updated on the CPCS program and ways to help improve water quality. Issues covered range from stormwater management, helpful information to reduce nonpoint source and stormwater pollution, recognition of new and renewing Partners, highlighting upcoming events, and creating networking opportunities. We hope you enjoy this issue of the Community Partners for Clean Streams eMonitor. As always, we welcome your feedback.

What is a Catch Basin?

With winter just around the corner, leaves are beginning to change color and fall from the trees. It becomes increasingly important to be aware of catch basins and how to keep them clean. So, what exactly is a catch basin? A catch basin is a chamber designed to collect stormwater and allow sediment and debris to settle into the sump. When it rains, water quickly washes over surfaces such as parking lots, rooftops, and sidewalks. To prevent flooding, this stormwater is directed towards catch basins that eventually reach a local waterway. A catch basin is designed to filter out large debris, sediment and some pollutants before the water heads into the drain, mainly to reduce clogging and flooding, but also to protect local waterways.

You can help by reducing the amount of trash and pollutants on the street, as well as keeping catch basin grates clean. Start by adopting a catch basin maintenance plan and schedule or contact our office for catch basin stencils and/or decal markers.



Who's Responsible?

Many drains in Washtenaw County are under the jurisdiction of the Water Resources Commissioner. However, most drains in the City of Ann Arbor are the responsibility of the city, and those located on County roads are under the jurisdiction of the Washtenaw County Road Commission. You should always check with your local city, village or township, or the Water Resources Commissioner's Office to determine which government agency or party has jurisdiction over the catch basins and drains near your business, neighborhood or condominium association.

The Water Resources Commissioner's Field Crew regularly removes debris and cleans storm grates, and the catch basins are vactored on an as-needed basis. The maintenance of catch basins located on private property are the responsibility of the property owner. Many businesses located in urbanized areas that have their own parking lots or other areas with drainage systems are responsible for catch basin care. This may mean occasional vactoring and regular debris removal from grates to prevent clogging and flooding. Contact your local authority to determine proper disposal of wastes from catch basins and grates.



Preventative Maintenance Schedule

We recommend that our Partners develop and implement a program to evaluate and, when necessary, clean catch basins and other stormwater structures at least once per year. Catch basins that accumulate more debris may need a more frequent cleaning schedule.

This autumn, make a plan to check and assess all structures after the leaves have fallen but before the first snowfall. Then check these basins again in the spring, removing any debris accumulation from the winter months. Once you visit your catch basins a couple times per year, you will be able to establish an appropriate preventative maintenance routine for your property.

Routine Cleaning

Catch basin cleaning involves the removal of accumulated sediment and debris, from sumps and surface grates. Routine cleaning helps to reduce the amount of debris, chemicals and sediment that enters into our local waterways. Catch basins are typically cleaned manually or with specially designed vacuum pump equipment commonly known as 'vactors'. The vactor cleaning method uses highly-pressurized water to loosen compacted materials while simultaneously vacuuming the debris. These trucks are expensive to purchase, but contractors can be employed for a variety of catch basin cleaning services.

Catch Basin Waste Disposal

The combined liquid/solid waste removed from the catch basin is legally defined as "liquid industrial waste", pursuant to Part 121, Liquid Industrial Wastes, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended. It's important to be aware that there are special disposal requirements for combined liquid industrial waste. If you use a contractor for maintenance be sure to ask about disposal methods since wastes are attributed to the facility or location where they originated.

Illicit Discharge

While conducting your inspection, remember to look for any suspicious discharges and take note of any unusual odors. This is great opportunity to look for potential pollution sources. If you see any illicit discharges, either 911 or call the Washtenaw County Environmental Reporting Line at 734-222-3880 for non-emergency issues.

PARTNER OF THE MONTH

Washtenaw County Road Commission



The partner of the month is chosen because it displays a notable environmental practice that relates to the monthly topic of the eMonitor. If you would like to nominate a partner or highlight your practices, please contact Community Partners.

The Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) has been working with CPCS in an effort to label catch basins throughout the county. Through its efforts, the WCRC is creating awareness and educating the public about the importance of watch quality and keeping pollutants out of catch basins. To date, the Washtenaw County Road Commission has installed approximately 1200 decals in 42 subdivisions. Taking awareness one step further, all new catch basin lids are embossed with the “Dump No Waste, Drains to River” statement.

WCRC owns and operates 5 active maintenance yards and other properties throughout the county. With assistance from the CPCS program, each yard was brought into compliance with all environmental laws and regulations. Additionally, WCRC has developed pollution incident prevention plans for each of the yards.

Adopt a Catch Basin

Clogged catch basin grates are the leading cause of stormwater flooding. Try adopting the catch basins around your business, parking lot area or in your own neighborhoods. We encourage businesses and homeowners to occasionally remove debris such as leaves, litter and grass clippings from the grates of catch basins.

If there is occasional flooding that results in Water Resources Commissioner maintenance in your neighborhood, you may find a door hanger that asks you to “adopt” a catch basin. Please consider becoming a part of the solution to prevent flooding and protect water quality!



Storm Drain Marking

Stencils or decals that promote the message, “Dump No Waste – Drains to the River” serve as a great reminder that only water belongs in the storm system. If you would like to add these markers or stencil the drains on your property, please contact us for more information. Community Partners receive the stencils or decals and adhesives **free of charge!** Catch basin labeling makes a great educational activity for employees, environment committees, and community or school groups! Consider marking or re-marking storm drains during scheduled catch basin inspections.



CPCS News

Thank you to our renewing partners. Together we can make a difference to keep Washtenaw County's waterways clean!

New Partners

We are always recruiting new partners. If you have any suggestions please call or email us.

Renewing Partners

Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation

- Gallup Livery
- Argo Livery
- Leslie Park and Golf Course

Resource Recycling Systems, Inc.

Kaiser Optical

ReCellular

Ann Arbor Farmer's Market

The New Center

Educational Materials

The Water Resources Commissioner's Office provides our educational materials and brochures at no cost to our partners. Please contact our office to place a request.

Subscribe/Unsubscribe

If you would prefer not to receive the monthly eMonitor, simply respond to this email with the word "subscribe" or "unsubscribe" in the subject line or body of the text.

Upcoming Events

Environmental Excellence Awards
October 6th, 2010

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