

# WATER NEWS ON TAP

## Polluted Stormwater: #1 Threat To Nation's Water

(NAPSA)—Rain may be good for flowers but it also brings serious problems to rivers, lakes, and coastal waters. Stormwater runoff from rain or snowmelt can wash dirt, chemicals, fertilizers, trash, oil and grease, and other pollutants into storm drains that lead directly to our waterways. In fact, polluted stormwater runoff is the largest cause of water quality problems in the U.S. today.

Because most storm drain systems provide no treatment to the water they collect, preventing stormwater contamination is vitally important.

Here are a few simple steps you can take to keep pollutants out of storm drains and waterways:

1. Use fertilizers and pesticides sparingly, follow directions, and avoid applying them when rain is forecast. Sweep up any excess from paved surfaces.

2. Reduce paved or impervious surfaces around your home or business by planting trees or gardens to help rainwater soak into the ground.

3. Choose native plants and grasses that are drought- and pest-resistant. Native plants often require less water, fertilizer and pesticides.

4. Disconnect downspouts and route them to vegetated areas.

5. Sweep up yard debris and compost or recycle where possible.

6. Don't hose down sidewalks or driveways or sweep trash into streets or storm drains. Pick up trash and dispose of it properly.

7. Pick up after your pet.

8. Use a commercial carwash that recycles water or wash your car on your lawn or other unpaved surface to minimize the amount of



**You can bring a halt to polluted stormwater runoff.**

dirty, soapy water flowing into nearby storm drains.

9. Don't dump chemicals or oil down storm drains. Ensure that leaks from your car are corrected immediately. Dispose of household hazardous wastes properly.

10. Properly maintain your septic system. Have your system professionally inspected at least every three years and pumped as necessary (usually every three to five years).

“Preventing stormwater pollution is everyone’s business and everyone’s responsibility. Homeowners and businesses can make a real difference,” says U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Acting Assistant Administrator Ben Grumbles.

To help raise awareness of the impact of stormwater pollution and let people know how they can help, EPA has teamed up with The Weather Channel to produce a half-hour educational program called “After The Storm.” Visit [www.epa.gov/weatherchannel](http://www.epa.gov/weatherchannel) for show times and for more information on preventing stormwater pollution.