

**This brochure was produced by the New Jersey Conservation Partnership:**

- New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts (NJACD)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- NJ Department of Agriculture, State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC)
- New Jersey's 16 Soil Conservation Districts (SCD)

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# Do You Know Where Your Storm Water Goes?

*Storm sewers are a direct link between us and our rivers and streams.*

If you look in the street outside of your home or office and search the parking lots around town, you will probably find storm sewer inlets. Did you ever wonder what happens to the water that spills down into the inlets?

A common misconception about storm sewers is that they carry water to a wastewater treatment plant. This is not usually the case. Storm sewers primarily transport stormwater (rain and melting snow) to the nearest river, lake, stream or wetland.

**Stormwater often contains pollutants found on streets and parking lots such as:**



- × **pet wastes**
- × **leaves and grass clippings**
- × **fertilizers and pesticides**
- × **soil**
- × **litter**
- × **gasoline**
- × **oil and antifreeze.**

When these materials enter surface waters such as lakes and streams they can destroy habitat, kill fish, ruin shellfish harvesting, reduce water clarity, and close beaches.

**Let's follow STORMIE and see how storm sewers provide a direct link between our daily activities and water pollution in lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands, and coastal waters.**

*Original artwork by Ron Zalme, Newton, NJ. The New Jersey Conservation Partnership would like to thank the Hartford County, CT Soil and Water Conservation District for their assistance with the information provided in this pamphlet.*

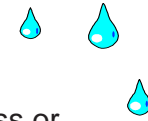
### Reducing pollution from stormwater – What you can do to help:

- ✓ Sweep (do not hose) soil, leaves, grass clippings, and any fertilizer off your sidewalk, driveway, and street to avoid having them end up in the sewer system. Compost these materials.
- ✓ Dispose of pet wastes properly; e.g. flushing down the toilet, wrapping tightly in a plastic bag and throwing in garbage (check local ordinances), burying, or composting in a pet waste composter.
- ✓ Dispose of motor oil, antifreeze, pesticides, paints, solvents, and other liquids properly (do not use storm sewers).
- ✓ Apply fertilizers and pesticides properly and in recommended amounts based on results of a soil test. Contact your county Rutgers Cooperative Extension office for information about soil testing.
- ✓ Minimize use of de-icing materials on sidewalks and driveways or use non-toxic substances such as sawdust.



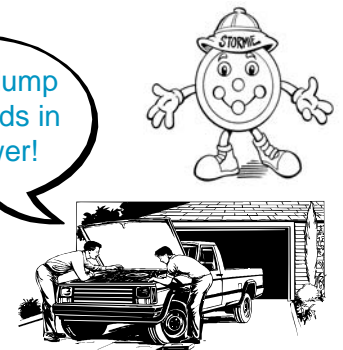
### What is a Watershed?

It is the land that water flows across or under on its way to a stream, river, or lake. The landscape is made up of many interconnected basins, or watersheds. Everyone lives in a watershed. You influence what happens in your watershed, good or bad, by how you treat the natural resources--the soil, water, air, plants, and animals.

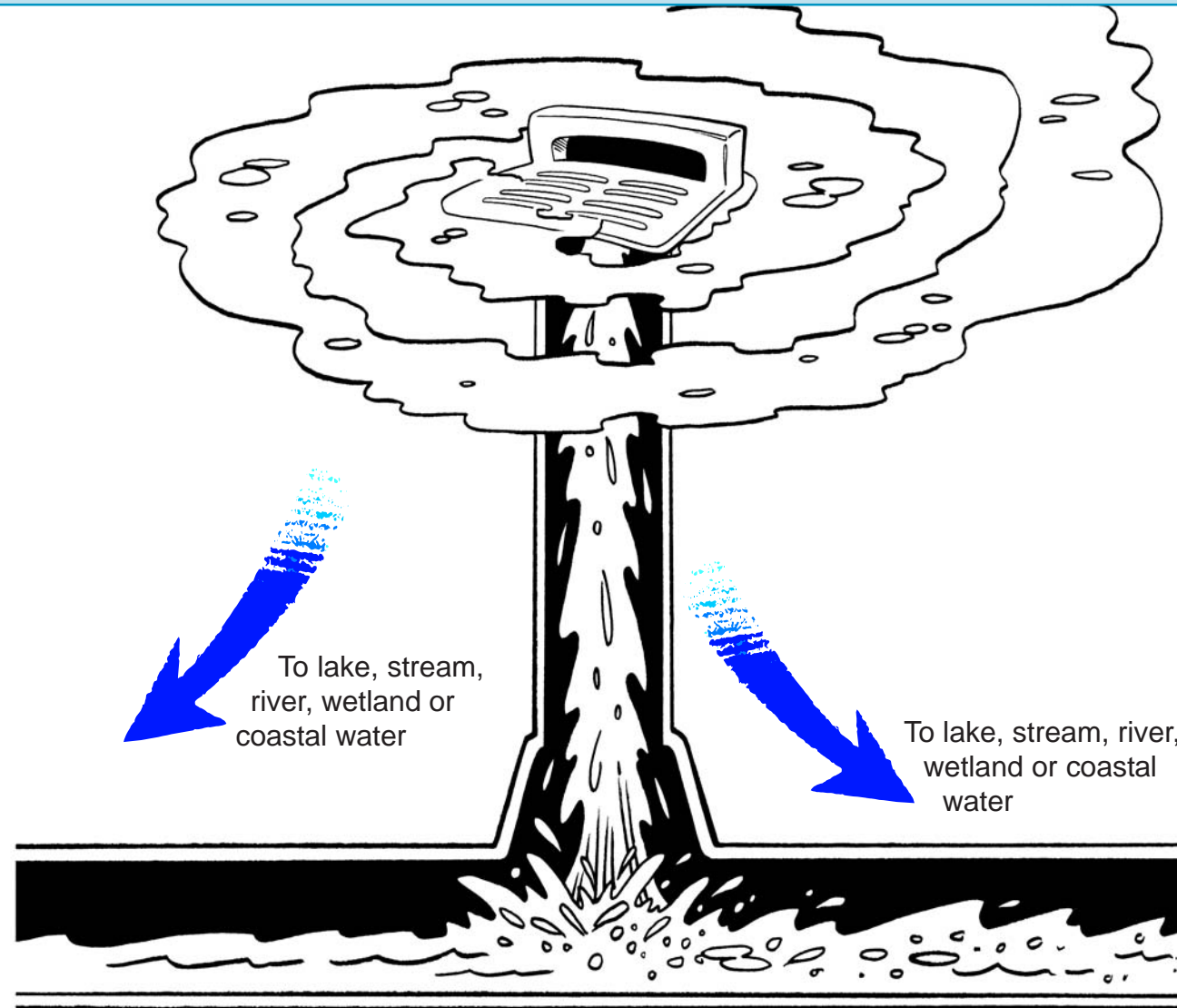


### What is nonpoint source pollution?

Nonpoint source (NPS) pollution is pollution associated with runoff from rainfall, snowmelt, lawnsprinkling, car washings, and sidewalk hoseings. It does not come directly from a building via a pipe but rather is the result of water running diffusely across a field, a yard, a sidewalk, a street, a parking lot—or seeping through the ground. NPS pollution includes anything that is picked up and carried by water—leaves, sediments, fertilizers, pesticides, road salt, animal droppings, litter, car fluids and drippings, and dissolved metals (from car corrosion and wear).

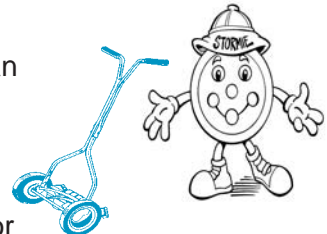


*With thousands of storm sewer inlets around town, stormwater is a major contributor to water pollution in urban areas. Although each storm sewer inlet contributes only a small number of pollutants, when added together, pollution concentrations often exceed the limits established for industries and wastewater treatment plants. If the pollutants entering each of these inlets can be reduced, so will the pollution in area waters.*



### What communities can do to help reduce water pollution:

- ✓ Install stormwater best management practices (BMPs) in all areas, and require stormwater BMPs in all new developments.
- ✓ Increase street sweeping, clean out catch basins, and reduce road salt application in winter.
- ✓ Require leaves and other yard wastes to be placed on the curb for collection rather than in the gutter.
- ✓ Support your Soil Conservation District in reducing erosion and sedimentation.
- ✓ Promote recycling and household chemical waste collection programs.



### Controlling volume of stormwater—What you can do to help:

Polluted stormwater is a major cause of water pollution problems in New Jersey. In addition to preventing substances from entering stormwater, you can help minimize stormwater pollution by increasing the amount of water that soaks into the ground, thus reducing the amount that flows into the street and down storm drains. Here's what you can do:

- ✓ Maintain some of your property in a natural state.
- ✓ Redirect downspouts from paved areas to vegetated areas.
- ✓ Plant trees, shrubs, or ground covers.
- ✓ Use a rain barrel to catch and store water for garden use.
- ✓ Install gravel trenches along driveways or patios.
- ✓ Use porous materials such as wooden planks, bricks, or stones for walkways and patios.
- ✓ If building or redoing a home, have any nonporous surfaces graded so water flows onto lawn areas.
- ✓ Wash your car on the lawn, not the driveway. Or take your car to a car wash. Most car washes recycle wash water for reuse.

