

# Storm Water Pollution

## *What is storm water?*

The term storm water refers to rainwater. Stormwater washes down storm drains on the curbs of roads and leads directly into lakes, rivers, and streams. Unlike wastewater, it is untreated and can carry pollutants, sediments, and trash directly into our natural water resources.

## *Why should I care?*

As storm water runoff travels over the land, it picks up all kinds of chemicals, waste, and trash that are not naturally found in our waterways. Stormwater runoff enters the storm drain system through inlets, and discharges untreated into creeks, lakes, and rivers. Some chemicals and other substances in storm water can be toxic, even at small levels, endangering plant and animals that depend on the water to survive. Pollution of our waterways can also mean we cannot boat, swim, or fish because it is unpleasant or even unsafe.

## *What can we do?*

Stormwater pollution can be controlled if everyone plays a part in preventing these substances from entering the storm drain inlets in the streets where they live and work. You can help prevent storm water pollution by eliminating illicit discharges; exercising responsible use of herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers in lawn and landscape maintenance; and proper disposal of used oil and toxic materials.

