

Stormwater Management for Homeowners

Learn ways to improve water quality in
your watershed by starting at home

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What is Stormwater Runoff?

Stormwater runoff is precipitation, from either rain or snowmelt, that flows across the land.

In a natural environment there are trees, grass, and soil to absorb and treat the water from rain events. However, urban environments have many impervious surfaces, such as paved streets, rooftops, and parking lots. Stormwater runs off these hard surfaces with a fast speed and does not infiltrate the ground.

Why does stormwater need to be managed?



Flooding

Stormwater runoff travels very quickly to streams. Streams cannot support this amount of water in such a short amount of time, so they flood.



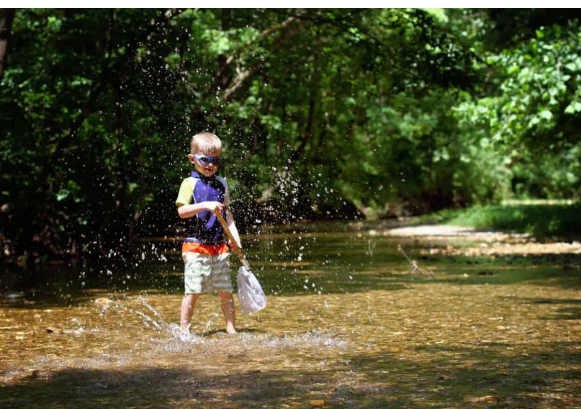
Pollution

When stormwater runs across impervious surfaces, it carries all of the trash, animal waste, fertilizer, pesticides, and more to a stormdrain. The untreated water then enters the closest body of water.



Stream Bank Erosion

Stormwater reaches streams with a high speed and power. This causes the streambank to erode and become unstable. This can be a threat to public and private property.



Human Health

Pollutants such as toxic chemicals, bacteria, viruses, and heavy metals can be carried by stormwater. These enter our waterways and can contaminate drinking water sources or recreational areas.

What can I do at home?



Install a Rain Barrel

Rain barrels are a great addition to any home and are an easy way to capture and reuse stormwater. Use your harvested rain water to water your plants, lawn, & trees, wash your car on your lawn, create a bird bath, or do household chores.

Redirect your Downspout

It's important to direct your downspout away from impervious surfaces, such as driveways, and toward permeable surfaces like lawns and gardens. This will give the stormwater a chance to slow down, penetrate the soil, and be treated naturally.



Use Pervious Pavers

Pervious pavers are a green solution for hard surfaces. They are created with an interlocking grid and are filled in with either grass or gravel to allow stormwater to percolate through and reach the soil underneath.





Seed bare soil

Water and wind are major culprits of land erosion. To combat these forces, seed grass on your exposed patches of soil to help stabilize the land and prevent the soil from eroding and entering bodies of water.

Sediment in our waterways has a negative impact by allowing less sunlight to enter the water, which is a major way of killing bacteria. In addition, this sediment may destroy the habitat of bottom-dwelling organisms.

Get a soil test

Before you add fertilizer to your lawn, be sure to test your soil to see if it really needs those extra nutrients or not. During rain events, these nutrients will run off and reach our waterways. Increased nutrients in water leads to algae blooms and lower dissolved oxygen, which can negatively affect aquatic organisms.

To avoid this runoff, buy a slow-release fertilizer, avoid applying it before rain events, on slopes, or near water bodies and storm drains.

Test your soil with Clemson Extension to learn the right type and amount of fertilizer that your soil needs.





Replace invasive species with native species

Native plant species are those that are natural to a region. Invasive plant species have been introduced to an area and outcompete the native species. Invasive species can adapt, grow, and spread quickly in an area to unmanageable levels. It's important to remove invasive species when you first see them so they don't take over. In their place, plant the species that are natural to the region.



Riparian Buffers

A riparian buffer is an undisturbed, naturally vegetated area of land along a waterway that buffers streams from pollution, creates wildlife habitat, stores floodwaters, and keeps the stream bank in tact. The plants within the buffer can naturally filter the incoming stormwater runoff to remove nutrients and pollution.

If you live along a waterway, plant a mixture of native grasses, shrubs, and trees to help the buffer thrive. The wider the buffer, the better! Buffers should be 30 feet wide at minimum but provide more benefits with more width.



Avoid the FOG Clog

When Fats, Oils, and Grease, otherwise known as FOG, are poured down the drain, they stick to the sewer lines, catch debris, and harden. Once these clogs accumulate, backups occur that send untreated sewage into the nearby environment and waterways.

Protect your pipes and environment by draining your FOG into a can, allowing it to cool, and trashing it.

Place "flushable" wipes in trash

These wipes are actually UNflushable since they do not break down the same way as toilet paper. Wipes can get caught in sewer pipes, catch debris & grease, and form a blockage within the pipes. This blockage can then cause untreated sewage to spill into the environment and our waterways.



Download the Litter Prevention app

See litter in the County limits that needs to be collected? Simply locate an area that needs attention, snap a photo and the location, and staff from Greenville County will come out and dispose of it properly.

This resource is great for both reporting litter and volunteering.



Welcome to the Greenville County, SC Litter Prevention App! We appreciate you helping keep our County clean and beautiful!



Report Litter



View Litter