

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT STORMWATER

The City of Auburn is involved in a Stormwater Pollution Prevention program designed to help keep urban stormwater runoff as clean as possible and protect our creeks, rivers, and other bodies of water. Our goals for this program on stormwater are:

- Educate and inform the public about urban runoff.
- Encourage public participation in community and Cedar Creek clean-up events.
- Work with industries and businesses to encourage pollution prevention.
- Require construction activities to reduce erosion and pollution.
- Require developing projects to include pollution controls that will continue to operate after construction is complete.

We work with our own internal departments and divisions to ensure that our construction projects are designed to reduce pollution, and that all our city facilities practice good housekeeping and pollution prevention.

Why Are We Concerned About Urban Runoff?

Before the Auburn area was developed, most rainfall fell onto natural areas and the water soaked into the ground. Over the last century, we have changed the landscape dramatically by adding roads, buildings, parking lots and homes. Stormwater that once soaked into the ground now flows quickly into street gutters and drains. It is then carried in pipes to our creeks, rivers, and lakes without treatment. Everyday activities also add water: activities such as car washing, lawn watering, and cleaning buildings and streets. Along the way, the fast-moving urban runoff picks up pollutants such as pesticides, fertilizers, eroded soil, and oil and grease from cars. These pollutants make their way into our creeks and rivers where they pollute the water and harm the ecosystem of both plants and animals. Eventually, this affects all of us, since we eat the fish and use the rivers for recreation and a water source for consumption. The City of Fort Wayne uses treated river water as a source of water for some of its residents.

How much runoff can there be?

For a section of roofing on your house that is 1,000 square feet, lets say 50'x20,' can generate 623 gallons of runoff just from that one section of roofing.

Let's look at a driveway for a 3-car garage that is 46' long and 30' wide during a 1" rainfall. That driveway will generate 860 gallons of rain runoff. Let's say you have 75 homes in your neighborhood. The total amount of runoff from the driveways, assuming they were all the same size, would be 64,500 gallons. Filling just under 5 standard below ground pools that are 15x30 with a 3ft shallow and 8 ft deep end. That's just the driveways in one neighborhood. That's not counting the roads, roofs, and sidewalks. All this runoff has potential of carrying pollutants with it to water bodies.

Where does Runoff Go?

80% of Auburns storm water conveyance systems are separated from the sanitary sewer lines. This means all those separated storm water systems do not get treated at the wastewater treatment plant and flow directly to retention/detention ponds and Cedar Creek. This is done to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff going to the wastewater treatment plant and to help eliminate those peaks at the plant during a rain event and allow the plant to treat just wastewater without the additional stormwater. After all, storm water should not have to be treated if we take care of it.

How Can You Help?

There are plenty of ways for Auburn area residents, students, community groups and businesses to get involved in storm water pollution prevention efforts. We need volunteers to help us get the word out. Take the first step by practicing pollution prevention in your own home, then join us in the many activities and events sponsored throughout our community. For information on all things Storm Water, how you can help, and a calendar of City events taking place go to <https://ci.auburn.in.us/229/MS4>

Information contained in this educational article was obtained from the USEPA storm water web site www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater. For additional information regarding your local storm water issues, please contact Drew Wallace, Program Coordinator at the City of Auburn Water Pollution Control, 2010 South Wayne St. Auburn IN 46706. (260-925-1714)