

## What is Stormwater?

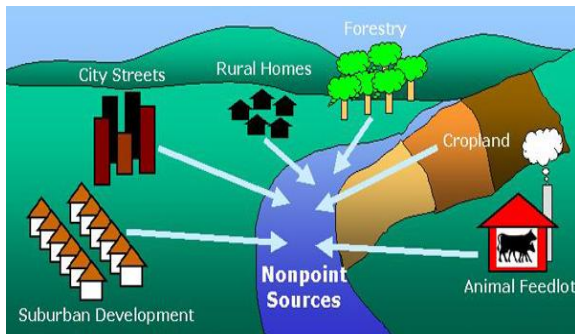
Stormwater is another name for rain and other types of precipitation. Stormwater is valuable and essential because it soaks into the earth to refill ground water and replenishes surface water in streams, creeks, rivers, lakes, and oceans.

Water is a finite natural resource, which means that we cannot make more. Jefferson County has more than 4,200 miles of waterways. We use them for many things, including fishing, recreation and drinking water.

## How does Stormwater become polluted runoff?

Stormwater picks up pollution as it comes in contact with the ground, paved areas, and other surfaces, and carries these untreated substances into the storm drain system. Stormwater that carries pollution is called polluted runoff.

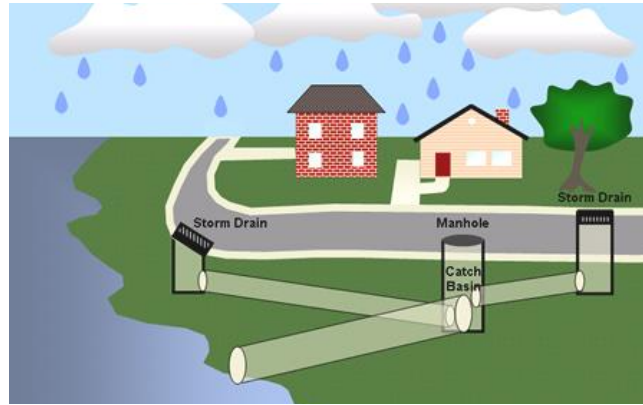
Polluted runoff is a growing threat to our waterways as more homes, buildings, streets, sidewalks and parking lots are constructed. These impervious surfaces do not allow water to soak into the ground. They force the stormwater to flow quickly, picking up many pollutants along the way.



*Polluted runoff, also called non-point source pollution, does not come from easily identified sources or events. It is the result of the everyday activities of people.*

## What is Polluted Runoff?

Polluted runoff consists of many common substances that become harmful to people, animals, and vegetation when introduced into waterways. Fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides from many yards and gardens, oil and grease from miles of roads and parking lots, heavy metals from roofs, eroded soil from construction sites and home landscaping projects, waste from pets, and litter and trash from people are carried by stormwater into the storm drain system where it all flows untreated into waterways.



*The storm drain system is a series of inlets, pipes, gutters, and ditches which carries untreated rain water away from streets and other paved areas and into nearby waterways.*

Sometimes polluted runoff can be hard to spot, while at other times it can be very obvious by its unpleasant appearance or odor. Either way, polluted runoff has negative effects on the surrounding environment. Fish and other aquatic animals die from lack of oxygen, harmful bacteria flourish, and toxic metals such as lead, zinc and mercury accumulate in the water.

***Polluted runoff accounts for more than 50% of the water pollution found in our surface waterways!***

## What is being done to protect your local water quality?

The Clean Water Act (CWA) and its amendments were passed to protect the health and safety of Americans. These laws require that population centers within the United States implement a program to reduce stormwater polluted runoff. These mandated but unfunded requirements are regulated and enforced by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and all 50 states are required to comply.

In Alabama, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) administers and enforces the CWA under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit program. ADEM issues Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) NPDES Permits to local governments required to implement a stormwater pollution prevention program.

Jefferson County is responsible for implementing and enforcing the requirements of its MS4 NPDES Permit and other NPDES Permits for unincorporated areas of the County.

The Jefferson County staff performs the following activities required by the NPDES Permit: waterway testing and monitoring; water quality data collection and interpretation; water pollution reporting hotline; construction site permitting and inspection; complaint investigation; public education and outreach; and preparation of an annual report to ADEM.

## How You Can Help

Pollution from stormwater runoff could be greatly reduced if each person living in our region would do just a few easy things to prevent its causes. Keeping vehicle fluids, yard debris, litter, and other materials out of the storm drain system is an important first step. Your part might seem small, but every little bit adds up to make a significant difference.

- Read and follow package label directions when using yard chemicals or household cleaners. Save money by only using the amount you really need.
- Fix or repair leaks on your vehicles and other equipment. Collect and recycle used oil.
- Properly dispose of or donate old paint.
- Pick up pet waste and discard in the trash.
- Capture rain water from your roof or downspouts for watering the lawn and inedible plants.
- Secure your loads when transporting items or materials before driving on roadways.
- Participate in Household Hazardous Waste Days to properly dispose of old cleaners, solvents, batteries, paint and other chemical waste.
- Schedule an educational program for your organization, event or neighborhood association. Call 325.8741.

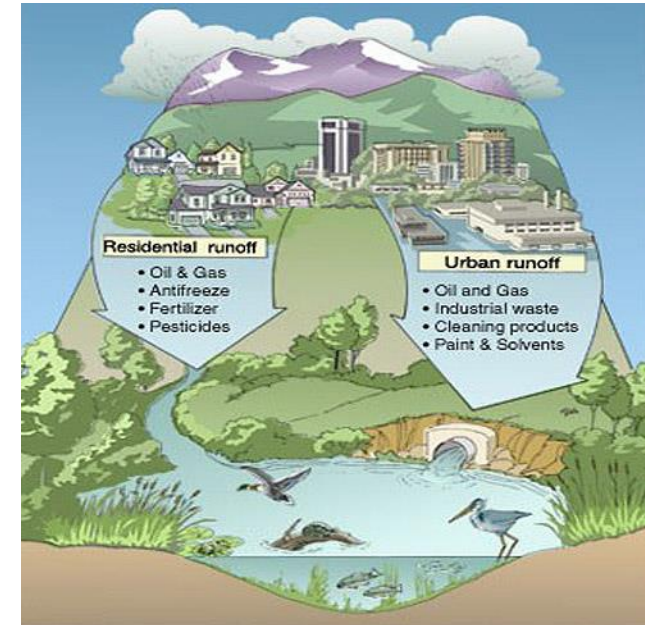
If you see water pollution, unlawful dumping or an illicit connection to the storm drain system, call the **Complaint Hotline: 325.5792**

Learn more at:  
[www.jccal.org/ds](http://www.jccal.org/ds)

Report suspected water pollution.  
Call the Complaint Hotline:  
205.325.5792

Jefferson County Commission  
Department of Development Services  
Room B-200  
Jefferson County Courthouse  
716 Richard Arrington, Jr. Blvd. North  
Birmingham, AL 35203

# Preventing Stormwater Polluted Runoff



## Jefferson County Stormwater Program

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