

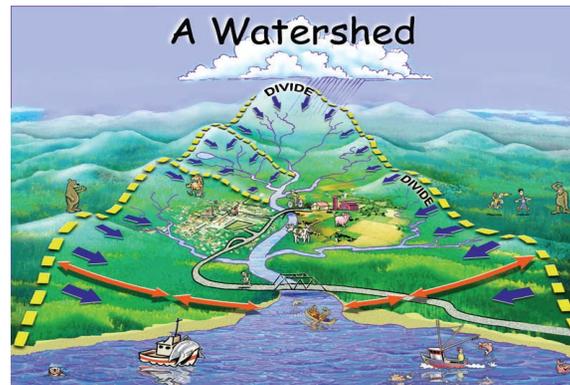
WHAT IS MS4

MS4 is commonly known as “Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems.”

All members of the Ontario-Wayne Stormwater Coalition have been mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to be included in this program to control stormwater runoff in order to protect and improve the Nation’s waterways. Polluted stormwater runoff is often transported to municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) and ultimately discharged into local rivers and streams without treatment.

This program is intended to improve the Nation’s waterways by reducing the quantity of pollutants that stormwater picks up and carries into storm sewer systems during storm events. Common pollutants include oil and grease from roadways, pesticides from lawns, sediment from construction sites, and carelessly discarded trash, such as cigarette butts, paper wrappers, and plastic bottles. When deposited into nearby waterways through MS4 discharges, these pollutants can impair the waterways, thereby discouraging recreational use of the resource, contaminating drinking water supplies, and interfering with the habitat for fish, other aquatic organisms, and wildlife.

We all live in a watershed. A watershed is a land area that drains into a waterbody, like a creek, river, or lake. Think of a watershed as a series of funnels nested inside each other. For example, when it rains, all the water from a watershed may travel to a creek or waterbody. From there, the creek will flow into a larger stream, which in turn collects water from a larger watershed. This brochure will provide you with some tips for helping to keep our waters clean.



The Homeowner & MS4. A Guide to Healthy Habits for Clean Water.



As stormwater flows over driveways, lawns and sidewalks it picks up debris, chemicals, dirt and other pollutants. Stormwater can flow into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream, river, wetland, or coastal water. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into the water bodies we use for swimming, fishing and providing drinking water. Polluted run-off is the nation’s greatest threat to clean water.

By practicing healthy household habits, homeowners can keep common pollutants like pesticides, pet waste, grass clippings and automotive fluids off the ground and out of stormwater.

Vehicle and Garage

Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on a lawn or other unpaved surface to minimize the amount of dirty, soapy water flowing into the storm drain and eventually into your local waterbody.



Check your car, boat, motorcycle and other machinery and equipment for leaks and spills. Make repairs as soon as possible. Clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material such as kitty litter or sand and don't rinse the spills into a near by storm drain.



Recycle used oil and other automotive fluids at participating service stations. Don't dump these chemicals down the storm drain, household drains of any kind or dispose of them in your trash.



Lawn and Garden

Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly. When use is necessary, use these chemicals in the recommended amounts. Avoid application if the forecast calls for rain: otherwise chemicals will be washed into your local stream.

Select plants that are drought and pest resistant. Native plants require less water, fertilizer and pesticides.

Sweep up yard debris rather than hosing down areas. Compost or recycled yard waste when possible.

Don't overwater your lawn (some sewer rates are based on water consumption). Water during the cool times of the day, and don't let water run off into the storm drain.

Cover piles of dirt and mulch being used in landscaping projects to prevent these pollutants from blowing or washing off your yard and into local waterbodies.



Home Repair & Improvement

Before beginning an outdoor project locate the nearest storm drains and protect them from debris and other material.

Sweep up and properly dispose of construction debris such as concrete and mortar.

Use hazardous substances like paints, solvents and cleaners in the smallest amounts possible, and follow the directions on the label. Clean up spills immediately and dispose of the waste safely. Store substances properly to avoid leaks and spills. Clean paint brushes in a sink, not outdoors.

Purchase and use nontoxic, biodegradable, recycled and recyclable products whenever possible.

