

WATERFRONT WISDOM — HEALTHY HABIT # 1: MINIMIZE STORM WATER RUNOFF FROM YOUR PROPERTY

As a waterfront homeowner, you have a unique opportunity to contribute to the health of your local waterway. Many activities we conduct near the waterfront, in our lawns and gardens and around our home, impact water quality. This is even more critical to riparian homeowners because runoff doesn't have far to travel before reaching the water. We can prevent water pollution by being aware that our actions DO impact water quality. We can all make a difference by practicing Healthy Habits for Clean Water.

CHALLENGE: Excessive aquatic plant growth and algal blooms, decreased water clarity, low stream flows and flashy flows, degraded habitat and shoreline erosion.

CAUSE: Impervious surfaces (driveways, sidewalks and rooftops) and loss of natural vegetation increase surface water runoff and reduce infiltration of water into the ground.

SOLUTION: ADDRESS RUNOFF BEFORE IT LEAVES YOUR PROPERTY. BETTER YET, KEEP WATER ON YOUR PROPERTY FOR USE IN AREAS SUCH AS YOUR GARDEN.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

LET IT RAIN! Redirect downspouts away from hard, paved surfaces into vegetated areas, such as a rain garden, or into a rain barrel for later use in the garden. Rain gardens are growing in popularity because they look great and filter pollutants out of runoff allowing clean water to infiltrate and replenish groundwater supplies.



HARVEST THE RAIN

WATER: Install a rain barrel which will collect runoff from rooftops when it rains or direct downspouts into garden areas. It's free water for use in the garden!

MINIMIZE IMPERVIOUS

SURFACES: Use porous landscaping materials, such as brick paving stones, sand or gravel beds and mulched areas, allowing spaces where water can infiltrate around and through the materials.

BE NATURAL:

Plant and maintain a buffer of taller vegetation (preferably Michigan native plant species) around the perimeter of your property and especially near the water to help slow runoff and provide added filtration. Native plant species are adapted to local soils, climate and environmental conditions. Native plants have extensive root systems that cut down watering needs, help infiltrate water back into the ground, minimize soil erosion and filter pollutants from runoff before leaving your property.



WATERSHEDS WITHIN OAKLAND COUNTY



We all live in a watershed—an area of land that drains to a common body of water, such as a lake, river or stream. Oakland County is home to the headwaters of five major watersheds and contains more than 1,400 lakes.

When it rains or the snow melts, this storm water runoff moves over the land and picks up any contaminants in its path. This runoff then travels to the nearest waterway without treatment. This is called non-point source pollution.

We can all be part of the solution to water pollution by practicing Healthy Habits for Clean Water at home.

TRY THESE OTHER HEALTHY HABITS FOR CLEAN WATER:

- #1: Minimize Storm Water Runoff from Your Property
- #2: Prevent Soil Erosion and Sedimentation
- #3: Maintain a Healthy Lawn and Garden
- #4: Plant and Maintain a Naturalized Shoreline or Streambank Buffer
- #5: Properly Manage Home, Yard and Animal Waste
- #6: Properly Maintain Your Septic System
- #7: Properly Maintain Your Boats and Other Recreational Vehicles

To learn how, visit www.oakgov.com/riparian, or call the WRC Environmental Team at 248-858-0958 for more information.

This publication has been provided to you by:



John P. McCulloch

Oakland County's 24-Hour Pollution Hotline: 248-858-0931

Call if you witness contamination in lakes, rivers or streams, discharges from pipes, sewage on the ground or in surface water, or a large number of dead fish in waterways.

Funding for this project was provided by the Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project (funded, in part, by U. S. Environmental Protection Agency Grants #XP995743-08)

Some graphics and photos provided by: Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's Office, Michigan Sea Grant, MSU Extension, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Macomb County Public Works Office Rain Garden Project, Wayne County Department of Environment, Huron River Watershed Council, City of Troy, Bloomfield Township and Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. A special thank you to Judy Graham of Orchard Lake for the use of her yard for some photos.



Publication design by Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc.