

ARE YOU A WATER POLLUTER?

River water pollution comes from many sources. In fact, some of your everyday activities in and around your house may be contributing to water pollution in ways you've never thought of before.

Many pollutants are carried into rivers and streams by the runoff that happens after it rains or when snow melts. Simple changes and increased awareness can go a long way toward improving river water quality and making Fort Wayne's rivers a more attractive centerpiece for river front development.

When it rains, water from your roof runs off through downspouts or directly onto the ground.

Once on the ground, the water may run across the lawn or down the driveway. As the water moves it picks up things like trash, cigarette butts and other litter that you can see. It also picks up bacteria from pet waste that may have been left on a lawn or sidewalk, fertilizers and pesticides you may have applied to your lawn or garden, and auto fluids that may have dripped on your driveway.

What you can do at home to reduce your potential pollution impact on our rivers:

1. Responsible Lawn Care If you apply chemicals to your lawn, follow the manufacturer's directions to avoid over-applying. Using more than is recommended is a waste of money and the excess may end up in the river where it can kill fish or cause algae to grow excessively.

2. Use Dry Clean-Up Methods If some of the dry chemicals you use on the lawn end up on the driveway or sidewalk, sweep it back onto the lawn. Avoid using the garden hose to wash the chemicals down the driveway and into the street.

3. Grasscycle/Keep Clippings on the Lawn Use a mulching mower to save time and energy when mowing your lawn. Instead of bagging the clippings, just mow and go. But don't forget to clean-up any clippings that end up on the sidewalk or in the street. Sweep or blow them back onto the lawn or clean them up with a broom and dustpan. Clippings may be covered with lawn chemicals or bacteria from pet waste and should not be left in the street or swept or washed to a storm drain.

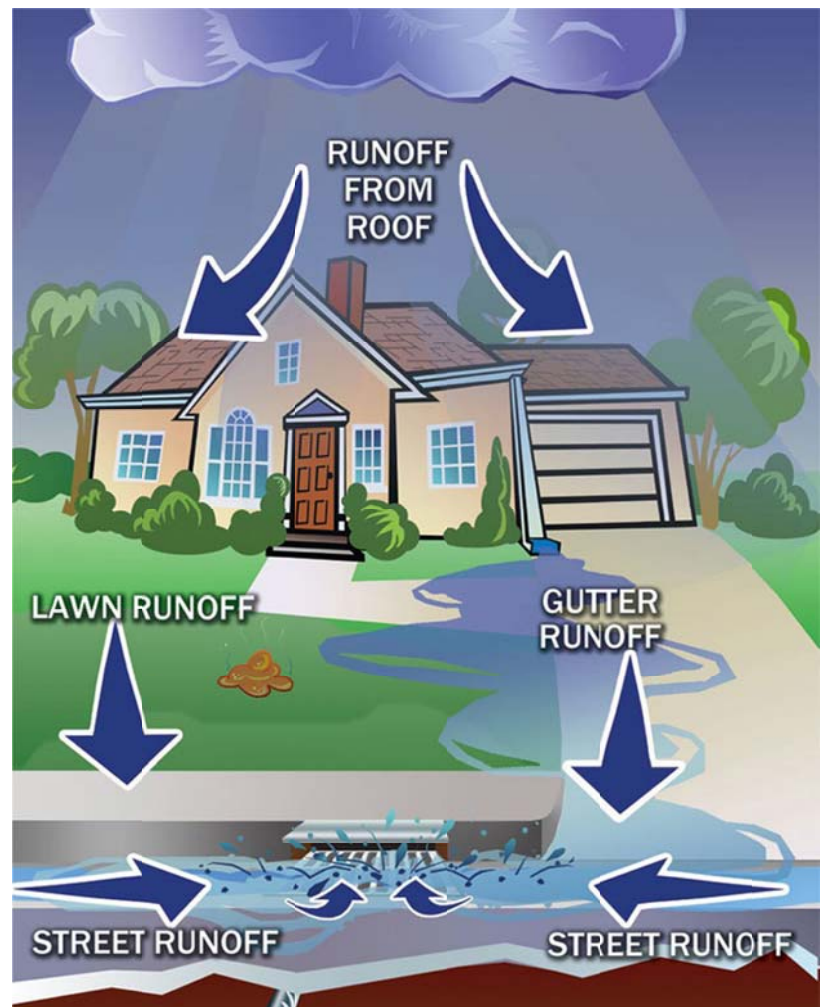


Image courtesy of North Carolina DENR

- 4. Don't be a Litterbug** Put trash in its place – a trashcan. Trash – including small things like cigarette butts – can wash into our rivers making them look trashy.
- 5. Recycle** Before throwing something in the trash, check to see if it can be recycled. If it is recyclable, place it in your recycling bin or drop off at a recycling facility.
- 6. Pick Up Pet Waste** Of course you want to pick up waste your pet leaves behind when you go on a walk. That's courteous and required by law. But even on your own lawn it's important to pick up the "poo" so the bacteria it contains won't be washed into a storm drain.
- 7. Fix Automotive Leaks** Even a small oil, gas or other fluid leak can leave behind residue that can be washed from your driveway into a storm drain. Getting those leaks fixed can reduce pollutants going to our rivers. It can also extend the life of your vehicle and keep you safe when driving. If you change the oil in your car at home, take the used oil to an automotive service center that can recycle it or dispose of it properly.
- 8. Don't Wash Your Car in the Driveway** Washing your car on a hard surface may cause soap and dirt to run down the driveway and into a storm drain. If you must wash your car at home, park it on the grass behind the house (temporarily) and use biodegradable soap. Better yet, take it to the car wash where the wash water can be disposed of properly or recycled.
- 9. Properly Dispose of Household Hazardous Waste** Take leftover cleaners, solvents, pesticides and other household chemicals to a hazardous waste collection center or save them for the next Allen County Tox-Away Day.
- 10. Respect the Storm Drain!** Water that goes into a storm sewer inlet or roadside ditch does not receive any kind of treatment before the water enters a lake, stream or one of our rivers. Any trash or pollutants that go down the storm drain will reappear in a river. Storm drain inlets are not the place to dump trash, chemicals, oil, paint or anything else. Remember: only rain (or melting snow) in the drain!
- 11. Report Pollution if You See It** Fort Wayne City Utilities relies on you to help us find and stop pollution. If you see trash being dumped along river banks, or someone putting something down a storm drain, or if you see something in a river or stream that just doesn't look "right", please call 311 to Report a Polluter. City Utilities will investigate and take action. The action we take depends on the severity of the issue and may range from educating the violator to court action and/or fines.

