

Understanding Stormwater Runoff



What is stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation from rain flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces such as driveways and streets prevent stormwater from naturally soaking into the ground.

Why is stormwater runoff a problem?

Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, and other pollutants and 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 that provide drinking water.

What are some effects of pollution?

Bacteria and other pathogens can wash into swimming areas and create health hazards. Debris, plastic bags, six-pack rings, bottles, and cigarette butts washed into water bodies can choke, suffocate, or disable aquatic life like ducks, fish, turtles, and birds. Household hazardous wastes such as insecticides, pesticides, paint, used motor oil, and other automobile fluids can poison aquatic life. Land animals and people can become sick or die from eating diseased fish and shellfish or from ingesting polluted water. Polluted stormwater often affects drinking water sources. This, in turn, can affect human health and increase drinking water treatment costs. In addition, excess nutrients can cause algal blooms. When algae die, they sink to the bottom of a water body and decompose in a process that removes oxygen from the water. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't exist in water with low dissolved oxygen levels.



For more information visit:
www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater
www.claycountygov.com

This is a public service announcement provided in conjunction with the Clay County National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program.