



Quinte  
CONSERVATION

# Stormwater Management



## What is Stormwater?

Every time it rains or the snow melts, the water running off the land can wash pollutants into the Bay of Quinte. This runoff, called stormwater, can be extreme in volume and level of pollutants. Concern about stormwater is greater in urban areas where high-density development and surfaces like pavement and concrete do not allow rain and snowmelt to filter into the soil. Efficient urban drainage systems contribute to the concern as they can quickly carry surging runoff loaded with polluted particles directly into our waterways.

Grease, oil, salt, gasoline, antifreeze, detergent, dog dirt, and cigarette butts,

are just some of the pollutants that wash off our streets and parking lots ending up in stormwater runoff. One of the recommendations of the Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan was that stormwater quality control must be provided for new urban development in municipalities with frontage on the Bay of Quinte.

## Quinte Conservation's Role

Quinte Conservation acts as the lead agency for the Stormwater Management Program of the Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan. A stormwater quality control program was initiated for the Bay of Quinte in 1991 to ensure that this recommendation was addressed. Many stormwater management treatment systems have



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now been constructed. Most stormwater treatment areas look like a pond. These ponds allow the flowing water to slow down, temporarily storing excess runoff so that many pollutants settle out. As municipalities updated Official Plans and Secondary Land Use planning documents, policies were included that recognize the need for stormwater management.

## What is a Storm Drain?



Storm drains are the grates found on the street by the curb. Runoff and rain water drain into these grates, go through a network of underground tunnels, and usually ends up in the local water body. The stuff that goes through a storm drain is usually not treated to remove pollutants before they reach the local water body. Often, people simply do not realize that storm drains do not go to the sewage treatment plant, or that simple activities, such as allowing soapy water to enter the drains, can be harmful to aquatic life. People may also be unaware of alternatives, such as pouring soapy water down their own household drains (which are treated at the sewage treatment plant before entering the river) or using biodegradable cleaning products.

## What You Can Do

There are many ways that you can help to reduce stormwater pollution and keep our waterways healthy and clean. Reduce

or eliminate chemical pesticide use, keep litter in its place, maintain your vehicle in good running order and clean up after your pet are just a few of the many ways that you can contribute to improved stormwater quality. Remember, everything that goes down the curbside drain eventually ends up in our closest waterway. You might also want to get your community involved in the Yellow Fish Road Program.

## Yellow Fish Road Program

Yellow Fish Road is a nation-wide environmental education program designed and managed by Trout Unlimited Canada. The Yellow Fish Road program's goal is to help Canadians understand that storm drains are the doorways to our rivers, lakes and streams. Preventing pollutants from entering our storm drains is critical to protecting and improving water quality and aquatic habitat. In most municipalities, storm drains flow directly into the local water body without being treated. Almost anything other than clean rainwater is harmful to fish and other aquatic life.

The Yellow Fish Road program has two main components, painting and door hangers. Participants learn about their local water supply and how to protect it from hazardous wastes. They then begin the program's active component by painting yellow fish near storm drains to serve as a reminder that any materials going down storm drains affects us all. Some municipalities currently adhere plastic information discs next to or near the storm drain. The participants also leave "fish hangers" (information pamphlets printed on yellow fish-shaped brochures) on doors in the community to inform residents of why yellow fish have appeared in their neighbourhood.

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