



Phase II Storm Water Program

Fall 2025

The Impacts of Stormwater on Aquatic Habitats and Wildlife

What's the Issue?

Rain in urban areas doesn't just soak into the ground. It races across pavement and picks up oil, trash, fertilizers, and other pollutants before rushing into creeks and streams. This surge of stormwater can also erode streambanks, cloud water with sediment, and harm fish and wildlife by altering their habitats. Excess nutrients from runoff like lawn fertilizers can also trigger algal blooms, choking out oxygen from waterways and threatening aquatic life. Heavy flows can also strain culverts and drainage systems and can increase the risk of flooding in nearby neighborhoods.

Solutions at the Community Level

Communities across the country are fighting back against these problems with solutions like rain gardens, permeable pavement, and even green roofs to slow and filter runoff. Many cities and municipalities conduct regular street sweeping and clearing of storm drains to help keep pollutants out of our waterways.

What can you do?

You too can make a difference by using native plants to absorb runoff, avoiding over-fertilizing lawns, and joining local clean-up events to keep drains clear and streams clean. Small changes at home can have a big impact. Consider installing a rain garden to slow down and filter runoff, or redirect downspouts to grassy areas instead of driveways. These steps reduce the volume of water hitting streams and also helps keep pollutants out of them. Every action counts in keeping our creeks and streams healthy for wildlife and future generations.

