

FORT SILL QUARTERLY ENVIRONMENTAL NEWSLETTER

Summer 2014



This newsletter provides helpful household and unit tips for protecting the environment and complying with environmental laws and regulations.

Stormwater

In both urbanized and industrial areas throughout Fort Sill, much of the land surface is covered by buildings and pavement, which do not allow rain and snowmelt to soak into the ground. Instead, most developed areas rely on storm drains to carry large amounts of runoff from roofs and paved areas to nearby waterways. As storm water flows over these areas, it picks up debris, chemicals, dirt and other pollutants. Anything that enters the storm sewer system is discharged untreated into the water bodies that are used for swimming, fishing and sometimes, drinking water. Polluted runoff is the nation's greatest

threat to clean water quality. The porous and varied terrain of natural landscapes like forests, wetlands, and grasslands traps rainwater and snowmelt and allows them to filter slowly into the ground and recycled naturally. However, impervious (nonporous) surfaces like roads, parking lots, and rooftops prevent rain and snowmelt from infiltrating, or soaking, into the ground. The loss of infiltration from urbanization may also cause profound groundwater changes. Although urbanization leads to great increases in flooding during and immediately after wet weather, it may also result in lower stream flows during dry weather. Many native fish and other aquatic life cannot survive when these conditions prevail.



Urbanization increases the variety and amount of pollutants carried into streams, rivers, and lakes. By practicing healthy habits, common pollutants like pesticides, pet waste, grass clippings and automotive fluids can be kept off the ground and out of storm water. Below is a list of a few healthy habits that can help lower the amount of pollutants entering the storm sewer system.

Use Smart Construction Methods to Reduce Stormwater Management



Vehicles and Garages:

Use the AAFES car wash instead of washing the car in the housing areas. The AAFES car wash facilities drain their water directly into the sanitary sewer system and not into the storm water system. Check your car and other machinery for leaks and spills. Make repairs as soon as possible and clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material like kitty litter or sand. Do not rinse the spills into the storm drain. Even rinsing off the side walk or drive way will result in the water eventually finding its way into the storm water system.

Remember, one drop of oil can pollute 1000's of gallons of water.

- Recycle used oil and other automotive fluids at the Auto Crafts Center. Do not dispose of these chemicals in the trash either.
- Vehicle fluids are the number one surface water quality problems nationwide.

Lawn and Garden:

Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly. When use is necessary, use these chemicals in

the recommended amounts. Avoid application if the forecast calls for rain.

- Sweep up yard debris rather than rinsing them off the sidewalk or drive way. Too many leaves and yard clippings can take oxygen out of water and suffocate the plants and fish that need oxygen to breath.
- Don't overwater the lawn. Water during the cool times of the day and don't let water run off into the storm drain.
- Use mulch for landscaping projects to prevent pollutants from blowing or washing off the yard and into the storm drain system.
- Vegetate bare spots to prevent soil erosion.

General:

- Purchase and use nontoxic, biodegradable, recycled and recyclable products whenever possible.
- Use hazardous substances like paints, solvents and cleaners in the smallest amounts possible. Clean up spills immediately.
- Remember to pick up pet waste and dispose of it properly.
- Pick up street litter and loose trash so that it can be prevented from blowing into storm drain inlets. Keep trash bins covered at all times and of course, don't litter.

For further information about compliance with environmental laws / regulations please contact Environmental Quality Division, DPW, 580-442-3266.

Only Rain Down the Storm Drain