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City of Dallas
Storm Water
Management



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Fact sheet: Storm water runoff

June 2005 -- The City of Dallas Storm Water Management developed the “It Goes With The Flow. Keep It Clean” campaign to educate the public about storm water pollution as one of the major contributors to the contamination of the City’s areas creeks, rivers, and lakes. The following are facts concerning storm water:

- The term storm water refers to rainwater. Storm water washes down into the City’s storm drains, which empty into creeks, rivers, and lakes. Unlike wastewater, rainwater is untreated and can carry pollutants, sediments, and trash directly into water resources.
- The Trinity River and its watershed are critical to the City of Dallas. There are more than seven types of harmful pesticides and herbicides washed down storm drains and found in the Trinity River. The quality of the water that flows into the Trinity must be safeguarded.
- Storm water runoff carries debris, chemicals, oils, fertilizers, yard waste, and other pollutants directly into the streams, rivers, ponds, and reservoirs that are used for recreation.
- Contaminated storm water runoff is one of the primary causes of water pollution in the U.S.
- One quart of used motor oil washed down a storm drain can pollute up to 250,000 gallons of water.
- One gallon of liquid soap washed down a storm drain can pollute up to 200,000 gallons of water.
- Yard waste, like grass clippings and fallen leaves, if washed into storm drains can deplete the oxygen level in water, endangering aquatic life.

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- Urban runoff containing pesticides and herbicides as well as the dumping of industrial and human waste have caused serious deterioration of the water quality in the Trinity River. The most severely affected area is a 250-mile segment of the river extending from Dallas to the headwaters of Lake Livingston. [Source: <http://www.texasoutside.com/easttexas/TrinityRiverNWR.htm>]
- Some of the common causes of pollution from storm water runoff include:
 - Sediment (dirt) will cloud water, making it difficult for aquatic plants to grow, decreasing the oxygen content of the water, and endangering fish.
 - Excess nutrients from fertilizers will create algae blooms, which remove oxygen from the water.
 - Debris such as plastic bags, cigarette butts and other trash, if ingested, can choke or suffocate wildlife, including ducks, geese, turtles and fish.
 - Household hazardous wastes like pesticides, insecticides and paint can harm fish and animals.
 - Pet waste can add bacteria to the water, which can have harmful effects on aquatic life, other wildlife, and humans.

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