

STORM WATER

Storm water management is an often misunderstood responsibility of communities. Over the years communities around the country have been implementing measures to improve the quality of our storm water and reduce the quantity of pollutants reaching our streams and rivers. Some examples of these measures are constructing raingardens around the city and placing dog waste stations in our parks. The City of Dallas would like to share some facts and tips on how to help keep storm water clean for your watershed.

A watershed is an area of land that drains to a common point, such as a nearby creek, stream, river or lake. Every small watershed drains to a larger watershed that eventually flows to the ocean. Watersheds support a wide variety of plants and wildlife and provide many outdoor recreation opportunities. Protecting the health of our watersheds preserves and enhances the quality of life for Dallas.



CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about storm water management, contact
City of Dallas
503-831-3559

Polk Soil and Water Conservation District
503-623-9680

For additional information about storm water management visit these websites:

<http://www.polkwsd.com>

<https://www.dallasor.gov/>



WHAT IS STORM WATER RUNOFF?

Storm water is water from rain or melting snow. Not all water runoff soaks into the ground, it flows from rooftops, over paved streets, sidewalks and parking lots, across bare soil, and through lawns and storm drains. As it flows, runoff collects and transports soil, pet waste, salt, pesticides, fertilizer, oil and grease, litter, toxic metals such as mercury and other pollutants. Untreated storm water drains directly into nearby creeks, streams and rivers. Polluted storm water contaminates local waterways. It can harm plants, fish and wildlife, while degrading the quality of water.

WHAT IS SEDIMENT?

Sediment is the loose sand, clay, silt and other soil particles that settle at the bottom of a body of water. Sediment can come from soil erosion or from the decomposition of plants and animals. Wind, water and ice help carry these particles to rivers and lakes.

SEDIMENT FACTS

1. The Environmental Protection Agency lists sediment as the most common pollutant in rivers, streams, lakes and reservoirs.
2. While natural erosion produces nearly 30 percent of the total sediment in the United States, accelerated erosion from human use of land accounts for the remaining 70 percent.
3. The most concentrated sediment releases come from construction activities, including relatively minor home building projects such as room additions.
4. Sediment pollution causes \$16 billion in environmental damage annually.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH SEDIMENT?

Sediment can contain mercury that has been identified as a pollutant affecting water quality and beneficial uses of the Rickreall Creek. Moreover, sediment entering storm water degrades the quality of water for drinking, wildlife and the land surrounding streams in the following ways:

1. Sediment fills up storm drains and catch basins used to carry water away from roads and homes, which increases the potential for flooding.
2. Water polluted with sediment becomes cloudy, preventing animals from seeing food.
3. Murky water prevents natural vegetation from growing in water.
4. Sediment in stream beds disrupts the natural food chain by destroying the habitat where the smallest stream organisms live and causing massive declines in fish populations.
5. Sediment increases the cost of treating drinking water and can result in odor and taste problems.
6. Sediment can clog fish gills, reducing resistance to disease, lowering growth rates, and affecting fish egg and larvae development.
7. Nutrients transported by sediment can activate blue-green algae that release toxins and can make swimmers sick.
8. Sediment deposits in rivers can alter the flow of water and reduce water depth, which makes navigation and recreational use more difficult.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. Sweep sidewalks and driveways instead of hosing them off. Washing these areas results in sediment and other pollutants running off into streams, rivers and lakes.
2. Use weed-free mulch when reseeding bare spots on your lawn and use straw erosion control blankets if restarting or tilling a lawn.
3. Clean up oil spills or leaks by placing kitty litter to absorb the oil and throw it in the garbage.
4. Notify local government officials when you see sediment entering streets or streams near a construction site.
5. Put compost or weed-free mulch on your garden to help keep soil from washing away.
6. Avoid mowing within 10 to 25 feet from the edge of a stream or creek. This will create a safe buffer zone that will help minimize erosion and naturally filter storm water runoff that may contain sediment.
7. Either wash your car at a commercial car wash or on a surface that absorbs water, such as grass or gravel.
8. Help pick up trash and debris from the street gutters before it gets washed into storm drains.
9. Pick up pet waste to help reduce the potential for disease causing bacteria.
10. Participate or volunteer in Clean up day or Arbor day

