

Water Quality Starts at Home

where each of us has an impact on the pollutants that we introduce into our environment. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) suggests these tips for protecting water quality.

- 1 Use fertilizers sparingly and sweep up driveways, sidewalks, and roads
- 2 Never dump anything down storm drains
- 3 Vegetate bare spots in your yard
- 4 Compost your yard waste
- 5 Avoid pesticides and learn about Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- 6 Direct downspouts away from paved surfaces
- 7 Take your car to the car wash instead of washing it in the driveway
- 8 Check your car for leaks and recycle motor oil
- 9 Pick up after your pet
- 10 Have your septic system pumped and inspected regularly



Additional Resources

Visit the Green Country Stormwater Alliance web site listed below for more details about stormwater protection, including pet waste control, household pollutants, recycling and reuse, and more.



Contact Information

For local information, contact your city or county stormwater coordinator.

For more information about stormwater protection, contact the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Water Quality Division at 405-702-8100 or visit the DEQ web site at

www.deq.state.ok.us/WQDnew/stormwater/index.html

For stormwater related complaints, call the DEQ statewide hotline at 1-800-522-0206. This number is answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Citizens may fill out an online complaint form at the DEQ web site at www.deq.state.ok.us/ECLsnew/Complaints/onlncmpl.htm and submit it electronically to the DEQ. The site also provides contact links to DEQ.

For local pollutant collection events, contact The Metropolitan Environmental Trust at 918-584-0584 or visit www.metrecycle.com.



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How to Protect Your Local Watershed





A Closer Look at

Ways to Protect Your Watershed

Understand Runoff

Urban and suburban areas are prone to having increased stormwater runoff to local watersheds. Because much of the urban landscape is paved, rain and snowmelt do not soak into the ground as well as they do in areas with natural cover, as the illustration below shows.

Did you know that a typical city block generates five times more runoff than a woodland area of the same size? And where there is increased runoff, there is an increased opportunity for pollutants such as oil, grease, pesticides, pet waste, sediment, and other substances to enter the stormwater system.

What Local Residents Can Do

Homeowners can use fertilizers sparingly and sweep driveways, sidewalks and roads instead of using a hose. Instead of disposing of yard waste, they can use the materials to start a compost pile. And homeowners can learn to use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to reduce dependence on harmful pesticides. For more information, visit www.epa.gov/pesticides/ipm/.

In addition, households can prevent polluted runoff by picking up after pets, and by using, storing and disposing of chemicals properly. Drivers should check their cars for leaks and recycle their motor oil and antifreeze when these fluids are changed.

Drivers can also avoid impacts from car wash runoff (e.g. grime, detergents, etc.) by using car wash facilities that do not generate runoff.

Households served by septic systems should have them inspected professionally and pumped every 3 to 5 years. They should use water conservation measures to extend the life of their septic systems.

Love Your Local Streams

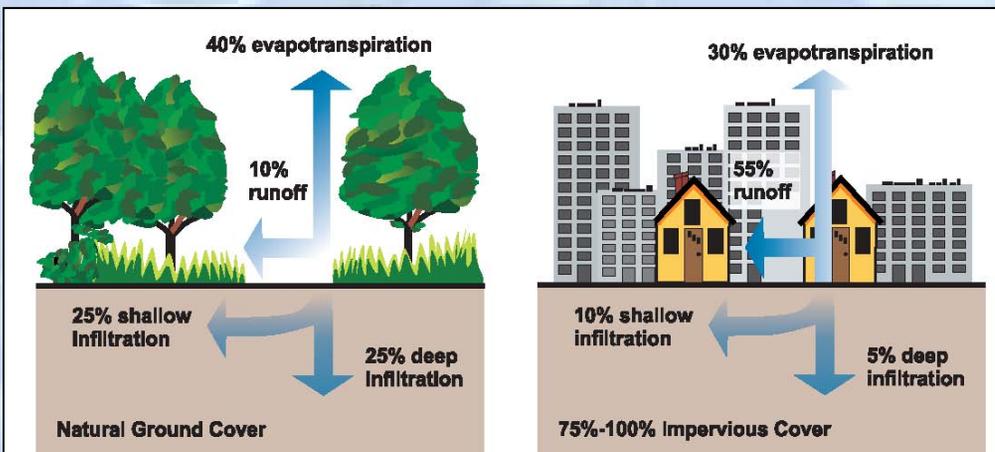
According to Oklahoma's Blue Thumb education program, it is best to leave your local stream in a wild state. A riparian zone (the area along a stream or lake where trees, grasses, and shrubs grow along the banks) left intact is one of the best ways to protect a waterbody. The natural growth along the stream will:

- Add shade to keep water cool, which is better for stream life
- Provide roots to keep soil in place and stabilize banks
- Filter pollutants from water
- Offer wildlife habitat and corridors for movement.

In urban areas, riparian zones are often cleared to make more land available for development or to create a "manicured" look. In rural areas, farming activities may be taking place right to the creek's bank. Help your neighbors to understand the value of riparian areas, and give your creek the chance to be a high quality waterbody.

Become a Stream Volunteer Monitor

More than 300 Oklahoma volunteers actively monitor more than 80 streams in an effort to help protect these waterbodies. Blue Thumb volunteers collect information about local streams through a three-step approach of chemical, biological and physical monitoring. To learn about volunteering visit www.okcc.state.ok.us/ED/ED_bluethumb.htm.



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IMPERVIOUS COVER AND SURFACE RUNOFF. Impervious cover in a watershed results in increased surface runoff. As little as 10 percent impervious cover in a watershed can result in stream degradation.