

Water Quality Starts at Home

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

- 1 Use fertilizers sparingly, and sweep excess off driveways and sidewalks.
- 2 Never dump or discard anything down storm drains.
- 3 Vegetate bare spots in your yard.
- 4 Compost your yard waste.
- 5 Minimize pesticide use, and consider Integrated Pest Management (IPM).
- 6 Direct gutter downspouts onto soil, away from paved surfaces.
- 7 Take your car to a 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.



Green Country Stormwater Alliance
www.stormwaterok.net

Contact Information

For information about the Green Country Stormwater Alliance, contact INCOG at 918-584-7526 or by email at stormwater@incog.org. 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/onlncompl.htm and submit it electronically to the DEQ. The site also provides contact links to DEQ.

For more information about household pollutant disposal options, visit www.metrecycle.com or call 918-584-0584.



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How to Protect Your Local Watershed



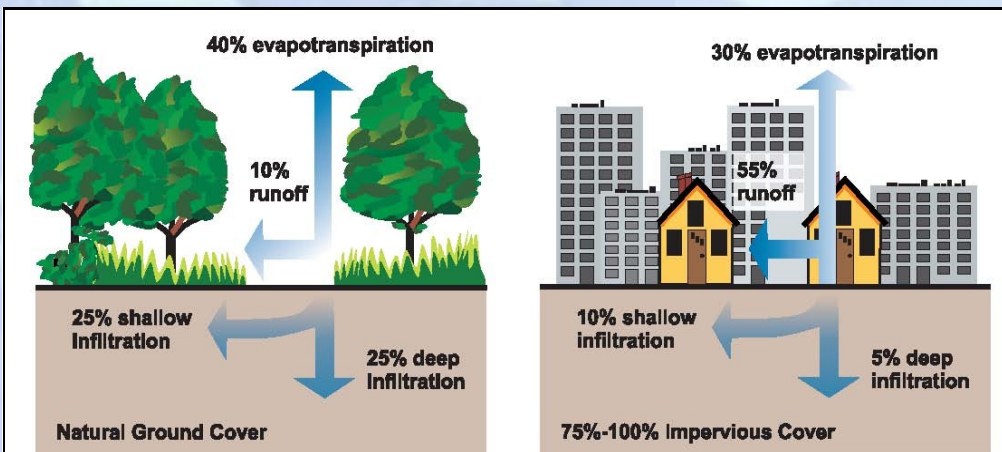


A Closer Look at Ways to Protect Your Watershed

Understand Runoff

Urbanized areas are prone to having increased stormwater runoff in local watersheds. Because much of the urban landscape is **paved**, rainfall does not soak into the ground as well as in areas with natural cover (see the illustration below).

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. These pollutants then flow **untreated** to local waterways.



IMPERVIOUS COVER CAUSES INCREASED SURFACE RUNOFF. As little as 10 percent impervious cover in a watershed can result in physical stream degradation and biological impacts.

What Local Residents Can Do

Homeowners should **use fertilizers sparingly**. **Sweep** driveways and sidewalks instead of using a hose. Use a **compost** pile for yard waste.

The EPA website <https://www.epa.gov/pesticides/> has information about pesticide regulation, use, proper disposal and EPA's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program that provides alternatives to minimize the use of pesticides.

Homeowners should pick up after **pets**, and use, store and dispose of **chemicals** properly. Check cars for leaks, and **recycle** motor oil and antifreeze when these fluids are changed. **Washing cars** in driveways causes polluted runoff (oils, detergents, etc.). Instead, use 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.

Water conservation measures should be used to extend the life of septic systems.

Protect Your Local Streams

As much as possible, it is best to leave your local stream in a wild state. A **riparian zone** (the area along stream and pond banks where trees, grasses, and shrubs grow) should be left intact as one of the best ways to protect a waterbody. The **natural growth** along the stream will:

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

In urban areas, **riparian zones are often cleared** for development or to create a "manicured" look. Help your neighbors understand the value of riparian areas, and give your creek the chance to be a high quality waterbody.

Become a Volunteer Stream Monitor

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC) manages the Oklahoma **Blue Thumb** volunteer stream monitoring program. Blue Thumb volunteers collect information about local streams through a three-step approach of chemical, biological and physical monitoring. The monitoring program is often integrated into other Blue Thumb community education and outreach activities. To learn about sites in your area or volunteering visit Blue Thumb at: <http://www.bluthumbok.com/>