



What is stormwater pollution? Anything that flows into our waterways that doesn't belong there is stormwater pollution. Whatever is washed into city storm drains flows directly into our rivers, creeks and lakes without filtration. Storm water runoff is one of the biggest problems facing our lakes and streams. Paved surfaces such as roads, alleys, driveways, roofs and sidewalks increase runoff. More stormwater runoff leads to degraded water quality, loss of habitat and aquatic life, increased flooding, and erosion. Even "natural" things like leaves can have an adverse effect when so many are washed into the Cannon River from the street.

What are some things you can do to improve water quality in your community?

- Keep grass clippings and fallen leaves on your lawn OR bring them to your local yard waste compost site. When these things are left on hard surfaces, they are swept into lakes and streams when it rains. This adds too many nutrients to lakes and rivers and results in stinky algae blooms and dead fish due to reduced oxygen in the water. Never blow or sweep leaves, grass, or soil into the street or storm water drains.
- Adopt a storm water drain in the street near your home and remove debris from the road.
- Pick up your pet's waste. Dog poop depletes oxygen which can result in fish kills. Nutrients in animal poop encourage algae growth, making the water potentially unsafe for swimming. A single pile of dog poop contains millions of E. coli bacteria. Properly dispose of animal waste; even in your yard, it can wash into local waterways after it rains, when the snow melts, or when watering with a hose or sprinkler.
- Use sand, not salt on your icy sidewalk and driveway. The chloride found in one teaspoon of ice melt is enough to permanently pollute five gallons of water! When the salted ice melts, it goes into the river. Chloride in high concentrations negatively impacts fish and other aquatic creatures; harms the structure of lakes by reducing plant and animal diversity; increases bird deaths; and damages grass, plants and trees.
- Fix leaks from your car. One quart of motor oil can contaminate up to two million gallons of drinking water or create an eight-acre oil slick! Be sure to properly dispose of motor oil, household hazardous waste, and antifreeze. Never pour them into your household sink, storm drain, or anywhere outside. Some auto repair shops will recycle your oil, and you can bring household hazardous waste to a local drop site for safe disposal.
- Pick up litter whenever you see it so it doesn't end up in the river.
- Never pour paint or other substances down street drains.
- Don't use pesticides or other chemicals on your lawn or garden. Many people use these chemicals to make their lawns look full and healthy. However, these products contain phosphorus and cause big green algae blooms in our waters. More algae means fewer fish and a stinky river! Use compost or phosphorus-free fertilizer on your property. Do not apply fertilizer before a rainfall. You can also keep grass clippings on your lawn as a natural fertilizer and skip the chemicals all together.

1st place winners will receive prizes.

1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners will have their posters displayed by the City of Northfield.

Posters should be submitted to the City of Northfield Engineering Office by 4:00pm on Friday, May 17. Posters submitted by mail should be sent to: Attn: Engineering – Water Quality Specialist, 801 Washington Street, Northfield, MN 55057. Students planning to drop off their poster in person can visit the Engineering Office on the ground floor of City Hall, across from the DMV.