

Stormwater Pollution Poster Contest

“Be the Solution to Stormwater Pollution” Poster Contest for Northfield Youth



Teacher Background Information:

What is stormwater pollution?

Anything that goes into our waterways that shouldn't be 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 storm water 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 from the street.

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

*Bag or compost your yard waste: leaves and grass clippings. When these things are left on hard surfaces they are swept into lakes and streams when it rains. This adds too many nutrients into the 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 encourages 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 the local waterways after it rains, when the snow melts, or when watering with the hose or sprinkler. Bag animal waste and place it in the trash- it's that simple.

*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 lake-living creatures, Harms the structure of lakes by reducing plant and animal diversity, Increases bird deaths, 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! If your car is leaky, fix it! And be sure to properly dispose of motor oil, household hazardous wastes, 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 wastes to a local drop site for safe disposal.

*Pick up litter so it doesn't end up in the river. *Never pour paint or other substances down street drains!

*Don't use chemicals on your lawn or garden: many people use toxic chemicals to make their lawns look full and healthy. These contain **phosphorus** and cause big green algal 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 and keep grass clippings on your lawn as a natural fertilizer and skip the chemicals all together.

1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners' will receive prizes and have their posters displayed at City Hall

Please contact Kevin Strauss, Clean Water Partners Community Engagement Coordinator kevin@cleanriverpartners.org with any additional questions or for more information: Email jpg copies of posters to kevin@cleanriverpartners.org. Drop off or Mail in submissions to: Stormwater Poster Contest c/o Cole Johnson, Water Quality Technician, Northfield City Hall, 801 Washington St, Northfield MN 55057

****Entries must be received by the end of the work day, 4 pm, Friday, May 6, 2022***