

Urban Polluted Runoff

The City discharges storm water runoff from its municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) under permit from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). The system consists of swales and storm sewers in our community. Water runoff from the system discharges to multiple tributaries and ultimately to Pewaukee Lake and the Fox River. Although the city conducts street sweeping and cleans street inlets and catch basins to remove sediments and some organic material before it can be conveyed to these waterways, pollutants still enter the waterways. The primary pollutants found are:

- Sediment from construction sites or landscaping activities, transportation related debris, and industrial fallout.
- Nutrients, particularly phosphorus and nitrogen, which come from over application or abuse of fertilizers, and organic material on roadways.
- Oxygen demanding material such as pet waste, leaves, grass clippings, and litter. As these materials decay, they use oxygen needed for aquatic life.
- Bacteria in runoff are generally associated as pet waste, urban wildlife, and illicit sanitary connections or other discharges.
- Toxic pollutants such as metals, pesticides, and petroleum compounds or their byproducts. Zinc is a common metal that can be traced to rooftops, gutters, and downspouts that are galvanized to prevent corrosion. Metals can also be traced to vehicle traffic deposits, which can contain zinc, cadmium, copper, and lead.

You can prevent urban polluted runoff through these various ways:

- Take household hazardous materials such as motor oil, antifreeze, oil base paint and paint thinner, and pesticides to the Household Hazardous Waste Sites (see City of Pewaukee Recycling Information and Waukesha County Recycling Center).
- Use kitty litter or other absorbent materials to clean spills. Sweep it up and put it in a sturdy garbage bag and put with your garbage.
- Water base paints should be dried out completely by opening the can and putting kitty litter in the can. Leave it to dry out for several days, put the can in a sturdy plastic garbage bag and leave with your garbage.
- Use your broom – rather than a garden hose – to remove soil and debris from paved areas. Put the debris from the broom in a bag and put with your garbage.
- Use lawn fertilizers and herbicides sparingly or test soil to determine need. Mulching clippings may provide all the nutrients needed. Choose or request fertilizers with no phosphorus (PHOSPHORUS IS BANNED IN PEWAUKEE FOR EXISTING LAWNS). Sweep and collect any over application left on walks and drives.
- Pick up pet waste and put it in the garbage or bury it. Please do not dispose of pet waste in the street inlets.
- Do not place leaves or other yard waste into the swales or inlets. Mulched leaves and yard waste make great compost which you can use to naturally fertilize your lawn and gardens – it is often referred to as “Black Gold”.