

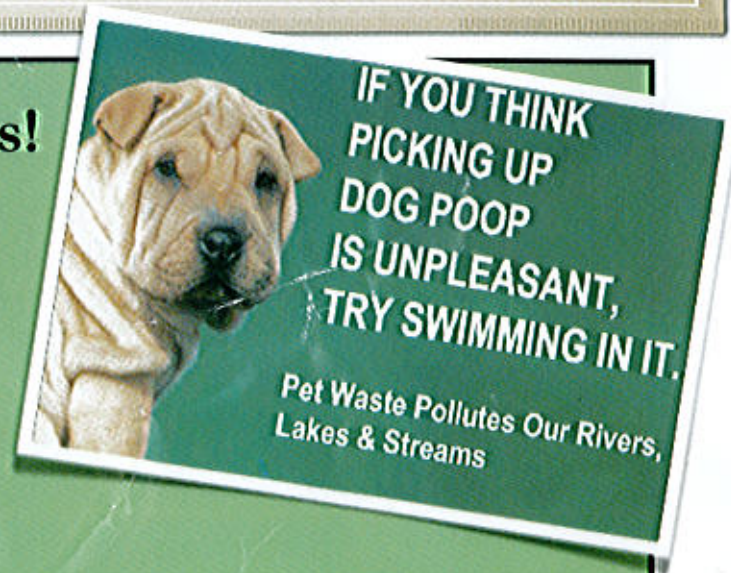
# The Scoop on Pet Poop!

**Please pick up after your pets!**

**Pick it up for our local waters:**

People love walking pets near the water. Unfortunately, pet waste contains disease causing pollutants and bacteria. If left on the ground, rainstorms wash these wastes into the Peconic Estuary, Long Island Sound, or the Atlantic Ocean. There the bacteria cause water quality issues and are often absorbed by the fish and shellfish we like to eat.

Pet wastes are also high in nutrients. Adding too many nutrients to the Estuary can cause harm to eelgrass, cause harmful algal blooms, and lead to low oxygen levels in the water making it uninhabitable for many plants and animals.



**Pick it up for our health:**

These contaminants in local waters can lead to shellfishing closures and/or swimming closures, because if we eat contaminated food, or swim in contaminated water, **we can get sick!** Pet waste can make the local beach unclean and unsanitary for people to play and enjoy.

**Pick it up for the community:**

Its also just the considerate thing to do. You don't like stepping in it and your neighbors certainly don't either!



# Do your part to keep our community and local waters clean and healthy!

## How?

- Bring plastic bags with you when you walk your dog (such as old bread bags, newspaper bags, veggie bags, etc.).
- Tie bags to your dogs leash so you don't forget them.
- Tie the filled bag and drop it in the trash, bury the waste, or flush it if you are connected to a sewer system.
- Look into purchasing a pet waste composter, but don't mix pet waste in with your regular compost.
- Take advantage of bag dispensers and talk to your town or village representatives about making sure they are continually stocked and added in all pet frequented locations (preferably with garbage pails nearby).
- Also share bags and information with other pet owners you meet.

**Make sure to scoop the poop every single time!**

## Why?

There are at least 6000 dogs living on the East End. On average one dog creates about 1/2 a pound of waste per day. That means our local environment receives at least 3000 pounds of pet waste per day! It all adds up, so its important to pick it up every time. Also be aware of local "pooper scooper" regulations that prohibit leaving pet waste where it lies.

**Tell your friends to scoop the poop too!**



**GRUP**  
FOR THE EAST END

[www.EastEndEnvironment.org](http://www.EastEndEnvironment.org)



# Be the Solution to Stormwater Pollution in Suffolk County

## What is Stormwater Pollution?

As rain or melting snow flows over roads, driveways and lawns it can pick up pollutants like motor oil, fertilizers, litter and pet waste.



This "stormwater" that is not absorbed and filtered by the ground is not treated and usually flows into a storm drain system or directly into nearby waterbodies. This becomes stormwater pollution and can be harmful to aquatic life and create human health risks.

## Did You Know?

- The Environmental Protection Agency considers stormwater pollution the nation's greatest threat to clean water.
- Your daily activities such as driving a car, lawn maintenance, and waste disposal can be significant sources of stormwater pollution.
- Over 18% of all litter is swept into waterways by stormwater.
- Suffolk County maintains 420 miles of roads that contain over 6,000 storm drains.

## How Does Stormwater Pollution Affect Us and the Environment?

Stormwater pollution can have many adverse impacts on people, plants and aquatic life.

- Household hazardous wastes like insecticides, pesticides, paint solvents and auto fluids can poison aquatic life.
- Bacteria and pathogens from pets/wildlife and leaking septic systems can create health hazards that result in bathing beach closures and shellfish harvest restrictions.
- Excess nutrients from lawn fertilizers can promote harmful algal blooms that lower oxygen levels in the water when they decompose. Fish and other aquatic organisms cannot live without sufficient oxygen levels.
- Litter like plastic bags, bottles and cigarette butts are unsightly and can harm, or even kill aquatic life.
- Sediment can cloud water and stress aquatic plants and animals. Excess sediment can also destroy aquatic habitats.



## What Suffolk County is Doing to Help Solve the Problem.

- Implementing a comprehensive Stormwater Management Program to reduce and remove sources of stormwater pollution from County owned roads, properties and facilities.
- Upgrading and expanding stormwater control methods on County roads and construction sites.
- Identifying, mapping and monitoring stormwater discharges from County roads and properties.
- Providing education and outreach services to Suffolk County residents.

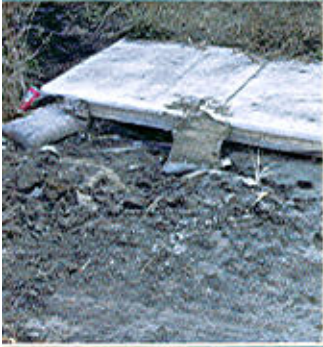




# The effects of pollution

## What is stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation from rain or snowmelt flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent stormwater from naturally soaking into the ground.



## Why is stormwater runoff a problem?



Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants and flow into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream, river, wetland, or coastal water. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into the waterbodies we use for swimming, fishing, and providing drinking water.

Polluted stormwater runoff can have many adverse effects on plants, fish, animals, and people.

- ◆ Sediment can cloud the water and make it difficult or impossible for aquatic plants to grow. Sediment also can destroy aquatic habitats.
- ◆ Excess nutrients can cause algae blooms. When algae die, they sink to the bottom and decompose in a process that removes oxygen from the water. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't exist in water with low dissolved oxygen levels.
- ◆ Bacteria and other pathogens can wash into swimming areas and create health hazards, often making beach closures necessary.
- ◆ Debris—plastic bags, six-pack rings, bottles, and cigarette butts—washed into waterbodies can choke, suffocate, or disable aquatic life like ducks, fish, turtles, and birds.
- ◆ Household hazardous wastes like insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil, and other auto fluids can poison aquatic life. Land animals and people can become sick or die from eating diseased fish and shellfish or ingesting polluted water.



- ◆ Polluted stormwater often affects drinking water sources. This, in turn, can affect human health and increase drinking water treatment costs.





# Stormwater Pollution Solutions

## Residential



*Recycle or properly dispose of household products that contain chemicals, such as insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, and used motor oil and other auto fluids. Don't pour them onto the ground or into storm drains.*

### Lawn care

Excess fertilizers and pesticides applied to lawns and gardens wash off and pollute streams. In addition, yard clippings and leaves can wash into storm drains and contribute nutrients and organic matter to streams.



- ◆ Don't overwater your lawn. Consider using a soaker hose instead of a sprinkler.
- ◆ Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly. When use is necessary, use these chemicals in the recommended amounts. Use organic mulch or safer pest control methods whenever possible.
- ◆ Compost or mulch yard waste. Don't leave it in the street or sweep it into storm drains or streams.
- ◆ Cover piles of dirt or mulch being used in landscaping projects.

### Septic systems

Leaking and poorly maintained septic systems release nutrients and pathogens (bacteria and viruses) that can be picked up by stormwater and discharged into nearby waterbodies. Pathogens can cause public health problems and environmental concerns.



- ◆ Inspect your system every 3 years and pump your tank as necessary (every 3 to 5 years).
- ◆ Don't dispose of household hazardous waste in sinks or toilets.

### Auto care

Washing your car and degreasing auto parts at home can send detergents and other contaminants through the storm sewer system. Dumping automotive fluids into storm drains has the same result as dumping the materials directly into a waterbody.



- ◆ Use a commercial car wash that treats or recycles its wastewater, or wash your car on your yard so the water infiltrates into the ground.
- ◆ Repair leaks and dispose of used auto fluids and batteries at designated drop-off or recycling locations.

### Pet waste

Pet waste can be a major source of bacteria and excess nutrients in local waters.



- ◆ When walking your pet, remember to pick up the waste and dispose of it properly. Flushing pet waste is the best disposal method. Leaving pet waste on the ground increases public health risks by allowing harmful bacteria and nutrients to wash into the storm drain and eventually into local waterbodies.



*Education is essential to changing people's behavior. Signs and markers near storm drains warn residents that pollutants entering the drains will be carried untreated into a local waterbody.*

## Residential landscaping

**Permeable Pavement**—Traditional concrete and asphalt don't allow water to soak into the ground. Instead these surfaces rely on storm drains to divert unwanted water. Permeable pavement systems allow rain and snowmelt to soak through, decreasing stormwater runoff.

**Rain Barrels**—You can collect rainwater from rooftops in mosquito-proof containers. The water can be used later on lawn or garden areas.



**Rain Gardens and Grassy Swales**—Specially designed areas planted with native plants can provide natural places for



rainwater to collect and soak into the ground. Rain from rooftop areas or paved areas can be diverted into these areas rather than into storm drains.

**Vegetated Filter Strips**—Filter strips are areas of native grass or plants created along roadways or streams. They trap the pollutants stormwater picks up as it flows across driveways and streets.

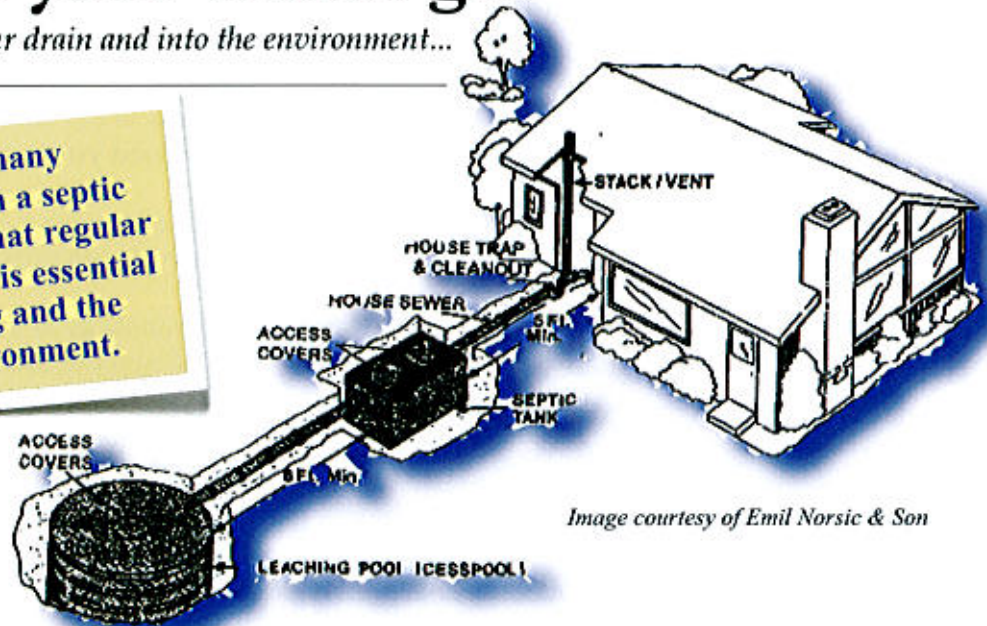


# SEPTIC SYSTEMS

## Where does your waste go?

Managing what goes down your drain and into the environment...

If you are one of the many homeowners who relies on a septic system, you should know that regular maintenance of the system is essential to its proper functioning and the health of the local environment.



While it may not be a pretty topic, "down the drain" waste management is an important issue for East Enders. It can be easy to forget that waste doesn't just disappear down the drain - it ends up in our backyards, groundwater, and local surface waters.

With this in mind, we must be careful about what we put down our drains and also protect the ecological systems that filter this waste.

Most homes on the East End deal with "down the drain" waste, either through on-site cesspools, septic tanks, or connection to community sewer systems.

For septic system owners, when water goes down the drain it flows through a series of pipes into a septic tank usually buried in the yard. This tank holds wastewater and allows some wastes to either sink down or float up, while the relatively clear water in the middle is slowly piped out into a leaching ring system (see figure).

However, this relatively clear water still contains nutrients (which can be harmful to the bays) and can contain chemicals you use in your home (which can also be harmful to the natural environment).

Septic systems need maintenance to ensure that this process continues smoothly. Tanks need to be pumped out so that the solids and scum can be removed from the bottom and top of the tanks. Also, at times older tanks may need to be replaced, upgraded, or moved to a more appropriate location (this often means being moved further away from surface waters). If this maintenance is not kept up, major problems such as septic tank leaks, overflow, or failure may occur. When this happens, not only is there often an expensive mess for homeowners to clean up, but there is also a strong possibility that pollutants and excess nutrients are reaching our local surface waters and contributing to nutrient loading, which causes unhealthy conditions such as algal blooms, and fish die offs.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO: Protect Local Ground and Surface Waters

- How do you know if/when your septic system needs to be pumped out or replaced? Get your septic system inspected right now (especially if it has been awhile since you last did this) and create a maintenance calendar for future pump-outs and inspections!
- On average, septic tanks need to be pumped out every 3 - 5 years, however this varies a bit with the size of the tank and number of people relying on it. Consult a professional to determine your needs.
- If your system needs to be replaced, try to do it right away if you can. The resulting mess of a septic failure can be much more costly to both the bays and your pocket.
- Conserve water and stop any faucets that are leaking or toilets that are running. When excess water runs down the drain, it can overload your septic system.
- Make sure your septic system is as far from the water as possible.
- Eliminate or at least reduce the chemicals that go down the drains in your home. Natural alternatives can be just as effective and are less harmful to the environment as they make their way through your septic system and out to our local bays. Also make sure grease does not go down drains as it can clog up septic systems.
- Eliminate garbage from your drains. Flushing solid materials clogs up the septic system and can lead to problems -- this also means avoiding use of garbage disposals.



### Local Rebates and Assistance Programs:

Southold Town currently has no septic tank pump-out or replacement rebates. Please contact your town supervisor and elected officials to request that they consider septic tank pump-out rebates, inspection programs, and replacement rebates for failing systems, or a revolving loan program to support homeowners' efforts.

### For Service on Your Septic System:

Look in the yellow pages under "septic tanks and system cleaning" or call your local chamber of commerce to find a reputable service provider in your area.

#### Links:

Peconic Estuary Program  
[www.peconicestuary.org](http://www.peconicestuary.org)

Peconic Baykeeper  
[www.peconicbaykeeper.org](http://www.peconicbaykeeper.org)

This information was brought to you by:



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## What Is Stormwater Runoff?

Stormwater runoff occurs after a rainfall. Storm water flows over impervious (unable to penetrate) surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, streets, parking lots and roofs and is unable to percolate (filter or seep) into the ground. This unfiltered water reaches our neighborhood streams, ponds, lakes, bays, wetlands and oceans and can eventually make its way into our ground water. (Water beneath the earth's surface)

## Why Is Stormwater Runoff a Problem?

Stormwater runoff can collect many different types of pollution before it reaches a body of water, including debris, dirt and chemicals. The storm water collects these materials and flows directly into a body of water like a stream or lake. These water bodies may be used for swimming, fishing and may even provide some of us with drinking water.

## How Do Different Types of Pollution Affect My Watershed?

There are two basic types of pollution: point source and non-point source. Point source pollution is easy to understand because it can be traced directly to its source. Point source pollution was a big concern in the past, but today stricter laws and regulations have drastically decreased the problem.

Non-point source pollution is a little more difficult to understand. Stormwater runoff pollution is a type of non-point source pollution. This means that the pollution cannot be traced back to a specific source, but instead comes from many different sources throughout the environment. Non-point source pollution is the primary cause of watershed pollution today. Non-point source pollution occurs when small amount of pollution from a large variety of sources is picked up by stormwater runoff and carried into water bodies.

Stormwater runoff can carry many different types of non-point source pollution. Each can affect your watershed in a different way. Sediment (dirt, soil, sand) can increase the turbidity (a measure of water cloudiness) of a water body. Turbidity can block sunlight from reaching aquatic plants, making it impossible for them to grow. Without plants, animals lose a food source and it is more difficult to filter pollutants from the water. Instead, pollutants collect in the bottom of the water body and remain there indefinitely.

Excess nutrients carried in stormwater runoff can also negatively affect our water supply. These nutrients, primarily nitrogen and phosphorus, can come from lawn fertilizers or natural sources, such as manure. Nutrients can cause algal and bacterial blooms, which proliferate (reproduce) rapidly. Algae will consume oxygen, increase turbidity in the water body and eventually die along with the fish and other aquatic life that need oxygen to live.

Debris such as plastic bags, bottles and cigarette butts can wash into a water body and interfere with aquatic life. Other hazardous wastes can be carried into a water body. These include insecticides, (chemicals used to control or kill insects) herbicides, (chemicals used to kill unwanted plants) paint, motor oil and heavy metals.

## What Can You Do?

Now you know that pollution from stormwater runoff can contaminate our water supply. So what can you do to prevent this problem? Here are some tips to help you on your way to a pollution solution:

- Never Dump Anything Down Storm Drains
- Use Fertilizers Sparingly
- Control Soil Erosion by Planting Over Bare Spots in Landscape
- Collect Rainwater in Rain Barrels for Lawn Use
- Sweep Driveways, Sidewalks and Roads Instead of Using Hose
- Compost Yard Waste
- Properly Dispose of Hazardous Household Chemicals
- Avoid Pesticides
- Direct Downspouts Away From Paved Surfaces
- Use Car Wash Instead of Washing Car in Driveway
- Check Car for Leaks and Recycle Motor Oil
- Properly Dispose of Pet Waste
- Inspect and Pump Septic Tank Regularly
- Protect Wetlands that Serve as Natural Buffers to Pollution, Soil Erosion and Flooding
- Join Adopt-a-Watershed
- Educate Friends, Family, Neighbors
- Recycle