

STORM SEWERS

The rivers beneath our feet

Nonpoint Source Pollution — You CAN Make a Difference

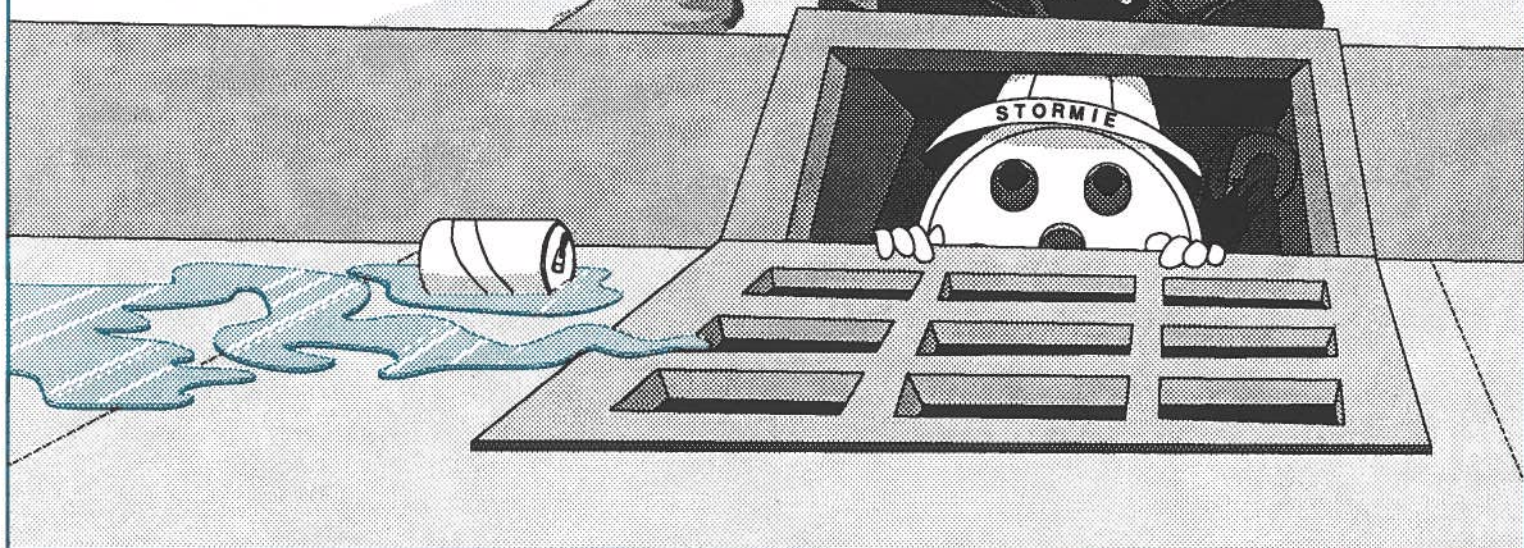
Where does the storm sewer go?

If you look in the street outside of your home or office and search the parking lots around town, you will probably find storm sewer inlets. Did you ever wonder where they go?

A common misconception about storm sewers is that they carry water to a waste-water treatment plant. This is not usually the case. Storm sewers primarily transport stormwater (rain and melting snow) to the nearest river, lake, stream, or wetland.

Stormwater often contains pollutants found on streets and parking lots such as oil, antifreeze, gasoline, soil, litter, pet wastes, fertilizers, pesticides, leaves, and grass clippings. When these materials enter surface waters such as lakes and streams they can destroy habitat, kill fish, ruin shellfish harvesting, reduce water clarity, and close beaches.

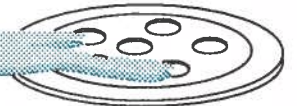
Let's follow STORMIE and see how storm sewers provide a direct link between our daily activities and water pollution in lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands, and coastal waters.



Controlling volume of stormwater – What you can do to help:

According to recent studies, polluted stormwater is a major cause of water pollution problems in Connecticut. In addition to preventing substances from entering stormwater, you can help minimize stormwater pollution by increasing the amount of water that soaks into the ground, thus reducing the amount that flows into the street and down storm drains. Here's what you can do:

- Maintain some of your property in a natural state.
- Plant trees, shrubs, or ground covers.
- Maintain your lawn with minimal use of chemicals.
- Redirect downspouts from paved areas to vegetated areas.
- Use a rain barrel to catch and store water for gardens.
- Install gravel trenches along driveways or patios.
- Use porous materials such as wooden planks, bricks, or stones for walkways and patios.
- If building or redoing a home, have any nonporous surfaces graded so water flows onto lawn areas.
- Wash your car on the lawn, not the driveway.



Nonpoint source pollution – What is it?

Nonpoint source (NPS) pollution is pollution associated with runoff from rainfall, snowmelt, lawnsprinkling, car washings, and sidewalk hosing. It does not come directly from a building via a pipe but rather is the result of water running diffusely across a field, a yard, a sidewalk, a street, a parking lot – or seeping through the ground. NPS pollution includes anything that is picked up and carried by water – leaves, sediments, fertilizers, pesticides, road salt, animal droppings, litter, car fluids and drippings, and dissolved metals (from car corrosion and wear). We all contribute to the problem. We all can contribute to the solution.

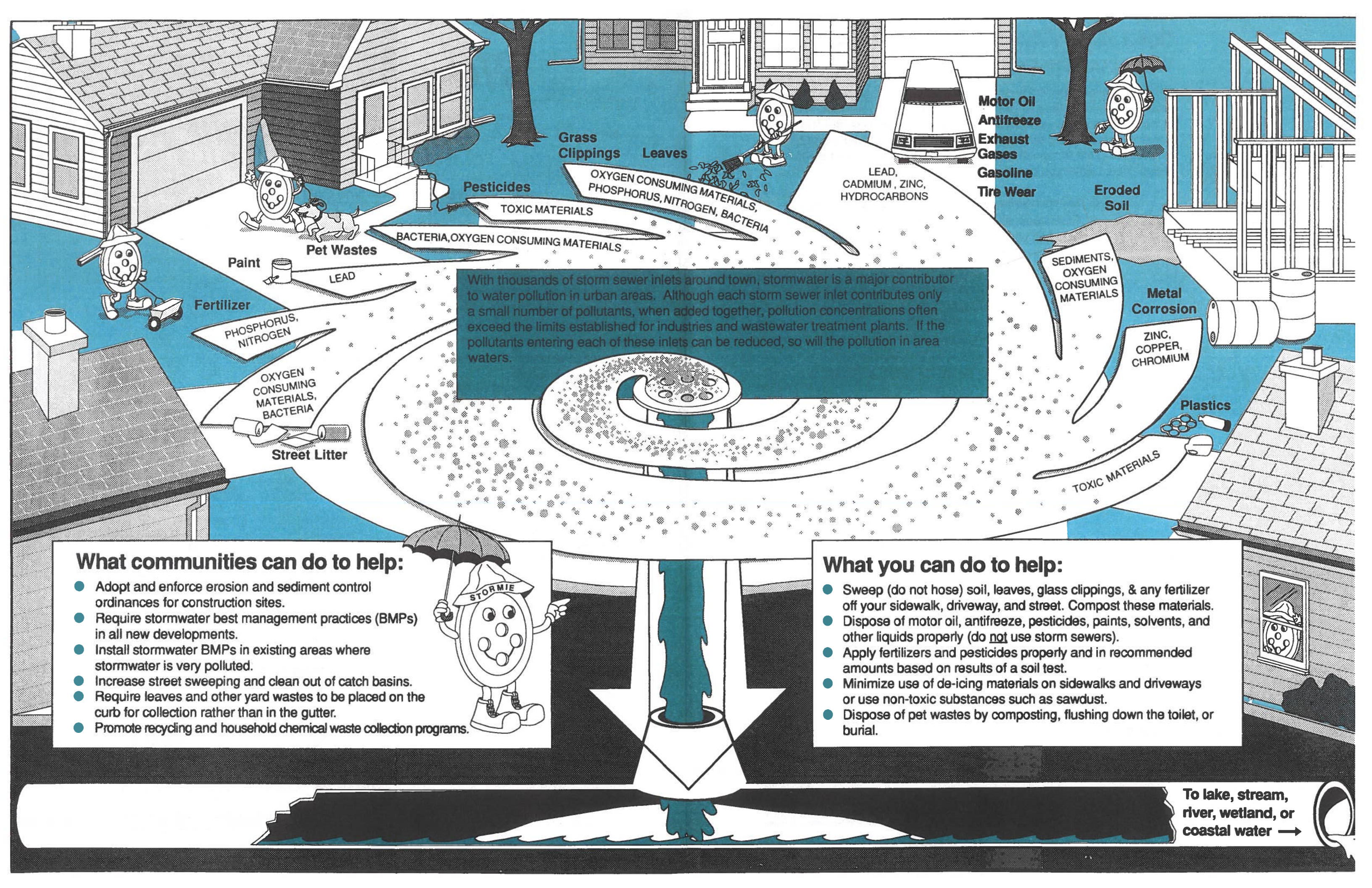
For more information on NPS pollution, contact:
NPS Program
DEP Bureau of Water Management
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127
(860-424-3020)

For additional copies of this brochure, contact
the Hartford County Soil and Water Conservation
District's office (860-688-7725).

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With thousands of storm sewer inlets around town, stormwater is a major contributor to water pollution in urban areas. Although each storm sewer inlet contributes only a small number of pollutants, when added together, pollution concentrations often exceed the limits established for industries and wastewater treatment plants. If the pollutants entering each of these inlets can be reduced, so will the pollution in area waters.

What communities can do to help:

- Adopt and enforce erosion and sediment control ordinances for construction sites.
- Require stormwater best management practices (BMPs) in all new developments.
- Install stormwater BMPs in existing areas where stormwater is very polluted.
- Increase street sweeping and clean out of catch basins.
- Require leaves and other yard wastes to be placed on the curb for collection rather than in the gutter.
- Promote recycling and household chemical waste collection programs.



What you can do to help:

- Sweep (do not hose) soil, leaves, glass clippings, & any fertilizer off your sidewalk, driveway, and street. Compost these materials.
- Dispose of motor oil, antifreeze, pesticides, paints, solvents, and other liquids properly (do not use storm sewers).
- Apply fertilizers and pesticides properly and in recommended amounts based on results of a soil test.
- Minimize use of de-icing materials on sidewalks and driveways or use non-toxic substances such as sawdust.
- Dispose of pet wastes by composting, flushing down the toilet, or burial.

To lake, stream, river, wetland, or coastal water →