

LITTER

Do you ever see people throw trash out of cars or on the ground? You surely don't do that, DO YOU? Litter on the street washes into storm drains and ditches, then ends up in ponds and Lake Tohopekaliga. It



harms water quality and wildlife. A tiny cigarette butt can take 25 years to break down! So, don't litter, and tell others to keep their butts in the car!

LET'S TALK ABOUT POOP

No, really, let's talk about poop. Does your family own a dog? Do you know other people with a dog? What do you think happens to all of the dog waste our pets leave behind? Right... down the storm drain and into the water! When you think about how many people own dogs, this can really build up! Did you know dog waste contains bacteria that can harm people? These bacteria end up in our drinking water if people don't pick up after dogs. Don't worry! Nobody has to give up his or her pooch! Pet owners can improve water quality by picking up after their pets and throwing their pet's waste into a trashcan or flush it down the toilet.



As you can see, there are many causes of stormwater pollution. Do your part to be the solution to pollution.



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LAWN CARE

Some people use fertilizer on lawns to help them grow. When people use more fertilizer than their lawn needs, or if they fertilize just before it rains, a lot of fertilizer ends up in runoff and not on the lawn. You



know what happens next... down the storm drain and into the lake. Fertilizer helps things grow, but when it gets in water, it helps algae grow. Algae blooms can cause major problems in waterways because they use up oxygen needed by other lake critters. What can people do who want to fertilize their lawn? Only use as much fertilizer as the lawn needs, and try not to fertilize before it rains.

Another thing to think about is the grass clippings left after you or your parents mow the lawn. What gets done with the leaves you rake? Putting grass clippings, leaves and yard debris in the street, storm drain or ditch can cause problems for you and your water. Storm drains can clog, streets can flood and water can become polluted. To avoid this, use clippings as fertilizer, use a mulching lawn mower, compost leaves and clippings, or bag them for yard waste collection day.

You & your family can also make a difference to improve our City's water quality by being part of the Adopt A Storm Drain Program. As a volunteer with this program, you will help keep pollutants out of our streams, ponds and Lake Tohopekaliga by cleaning off the top of a storm drain grate in your neighborhood once a month. Call us today at the phone number below to find out how to get started.

STORMWATER & RUNOFF POLLUTION



Above: examples of people cleaning their homes and cars, but in ways that can damage the environment, especially our water.

WHAT IS STORMWATER POLLUTION?

When it rains, some of the rainwater soaks into the ground, and part of it flows over the ground and directly into streams, ponds and Lake Tohopekaliga. This water is called runoff, or sometimes stormwater runoff. Clever, huh? Sometimes this stormwater runoff gets polluted. Pollution is anything that harms



natural resources, whether it is air, soil, or in this case, water. Sometimes the pollution is something you can see, like trash floating on top of the water. Other

times you can't see the pollution at all, like when motor oil from a car washes into a nearby pond. Polluted runoff is the number one cause of water pollution in the United States, and Florida is no exception.



So, who is to blame? Who is making the water that we drink and swim in dirty? We all are... take a look at the following examples:

WASHING THE CAR

Have you ever washed your parents' car? It's fun, and you can soak your friends with the hose! If you wash the car in the driveway, all of the soap, suds and oily grit run down into the storm drain. Did you know the storm drains on your street and in your neighborhood carry rainwater away from your house, apartment building, or yard, directing it to the ditches and ponds near you? If you live in the country, water from your yard may go into a ditch and then flow to ponds and Lake Tohopekaliga. It is not cleaned or treated along the way, so anything that goes to the storm drain or ditch goes into the water. Soap and oily grit aren't good for the animals in the lake, and they aren't good for us when we use the lake water for swimming or fishing.



So, do you get to tell your parents that you will not wash the car? Sorry, there's a better solution. Wash the car on the lawn, instead of the street or driveway. Streets and driveways are made of asphalt, which is impervious, meaning that water can't go through it. The lawn is pervious, meaning water can soak into it and it will not go straight to the storm drain. When people wash their car on a pervious surface, or better yet take it to a car wash where the water gets treated, they help to reduce stormwater pollution.