

### **What is Nonpoint Source (NPS) Pollution and Where Does It Come From?**

Unfortunately, pollutants enter our waters from many sources. Unlike a point source, such as a discharge pipe from a factory, nonpoint source pollution (NPS) comes from many diverse sources and is much more difficult to control. NPS pollutants are carried off the land by storm water runoff. Each one of us, whether we know it or not, can contribute to nonpoint source pollution through common activities such as fertilizing the lawn, walking pets, changing motor oil, and littering. With each rainfall, pollutants generated by these and other activities are washed into the storm drains that flow directly into our creeks, streams, and lakes.

### **How Big A Threat Is Nonpoint Source Pollution?**

Nonpoint source pollution has been identified as the nation's main cause of water quality problems. Nonpoint source pollution is the BIGGEST threat to many of our ponds, creeks, lakes and streams. The collective impact of nonpoint source pollution threatens aquatic life, recreational water activities, the fishing industry, tourism, and our precious drinking water resources.

### **How Does NPS Pollution Affect Water Quality?**

Because nonpoint source pollution originates from widely scattered sources, it can be difficult to control. Here are just a few of the consequences of nonpoint source pollution:

**Fertilizers, bacteria, and nutrients** cause excessive growth of aquatic vegetation and can lead to oxygen depleted conditions which seriously damage aquatic habitat and life;

**Pesticides and compounds from automotive fluids** can contaminate the food chain with long-term effects on wildlife and human health; and

**Sediments and erosion** from construction sites and croplands deplete the oxygen and smother aquatic life.

### **How is Nonpoint Source Pollution Measured?**

Water quality standards are set by state and federal laws in order to protect our waters for the beneficial uses we all enjoy, like clean drinking water and recreational activities. Based on the laws, numeric and narrative criteria are established for describing the water quality. The Richardson Health Department is responsible for monitoring water quality in Richardson streams and creeks. These measurements are used to track the effectiveness of preventive measures, called Best Management Practices (or BMPS), instituted to protect water quality.

### **What Is The Difference Between The Storm Drainage System And The Wastewater System?**

The storm drainage system consists of the natural and manmade channels and underground pipes (storm drains) that transport rainwater from streets, yards, and other areas. This water goes directly to our creeks, streams, and lakes carrying any pollutants with it. Water entering the storm drainage system is not treated. The wastewater (sanitary sewer) system consists of a branching network of pipes and manholes. It is used to collect and transport waste water from sinks, washing machines, toilets, car washes, and other such facilities. Wastewater is treated, disinfected, and released to a waterbody. The two systems are not connected in any way.

### **How Can I Help Prevent Nonpoint Source Pollution?**

Nonpoint source pollution is everyone's responsibility because we all contribute to it. As an individual you can practice these daily conservation practices:

**Home and Garden**

Keep pet wastes, leaves, and debris out of gutters and storm drains. Follow label directions and apply lawn and garden chemicals sparingly, or use nontoxic products in your gardening. Control soil erosion by planting ground cover and stabilizing erosion-prone areas.

**Household Hazardous Waste**

Dispose of used pesticides, paint, and other household chemicals properly. It is best that these materials be completely used up in accordance with label instructions or given to someone else who can use them. Never dump paint brush wash water, solvents, or swimming pool filter backwash into the storm drains.

**Car Washing**

Wash your car only when necessary. Consider using a commercial car wash. If you wash your car at home, use a non-phosphate detergent.

**Used Automotive Fluids**

It is illegal to pour used engine fluids down a storm drain. Motor oil and oil filters may be taken to the Lookout Transfer Station at 1601 Lookout Drive. Also, check with area merchants as many Richardson businesses provide recycling and disposal services to the public.

**What Can I Do  
To Help Stop  
Illegal Dumping?**

If you should see an illegal dumping, call the North Central Texas Illegal Dumping Hotline at:

**1-888-335-DUMP**

Help law enforcement officials by taking an active role in fighting environmental crime.

**How Can I Find Out  
More About Nonpoint Source Pollution?**

For additional information about nonpoint source pollution, call:

**City of Richardson  
Health Department**