



Cooperative Extension Service | Agriculture and Natural Resources | Family and Consumer Sciences | 4-H Youth Development | Community and Economic Development

## What is stormwater?



When rain or snowmelt flows over surfaces such as rooftops, sidewalks, or driveways, it is called stormwater.

As stormwater moves across lawns and paved areas, it picks up bacteria, nutrients, sediments, heavy metals, and chemicals before traveling through the storm sewers to our water bodies. Because the stormwater is not cleaned or treated, it creates harmful conditions for the environment and for us.

## What harm can stormwater cause?

- Trash in water bodies can kill or disable birds, turtles, and fish.
- **Too many nutrients** in a water body promote algae growth. Too much algae lowers the oxygen level of the water. Fish and other water organisms need

oxygen to live.

- Pollution from stormwater increases the risk of contaminated drinking water.
- Contamination increases watertreatment costs.



## How can you reduce stormwater pollution?

- Don't litter.
- Compost yard waste.
- Never sweep contaminants into the street or storm drain.
- Choose hardy plants that require little water.
- **Use** fertilizers and pesticides sparingly.
- Cover bare soil with straw or mulch to prevent soil erosion.
- **Use wood, brick, or gravel** for patios and walkways so water can soak in rather than running off.
- Pick up after your pet.
- Maintain your septic system by having it serviced every three to five years.
- Walk, bike, or carpool so fewer pollutants are released into the air.



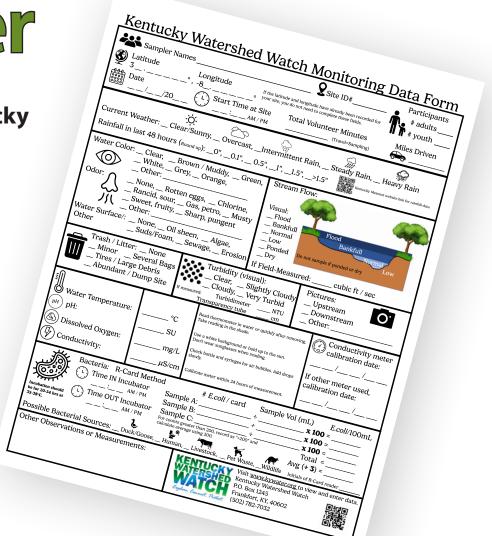


- Install a rain garden to capture and reduce runoff.
- Use a rain barrel to capture runoff from rooftops.
- Dispose of solid and hazardous wastes properly.
- Recycle items such as paint, electronics, and batteries.
- Visit http://www.earth911.com/ recycling/ to learn how to recycle in your area.
- Contact your county solid waste coordinator or cooperative extension agent for information.

# Volunteer

You can volunteer to monitor your local stream with **Kentucky Watershed Watch!** 

http://kywater.org/



Revised by Lee Moser and Katherine Bullock.

Adapted from Reducing Stormwater Pollution (AEN-106).

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