

know where
it goes

take simple
steps to reduce
STORMWATER POLLUTION



Do You Scoop The Poop?

Updated 2017

Pet waste doesn't just decompose. It adds harmful bacteria and nutrients to local waters when it's not disposed of properly.



It's Really A Problem?

It might not seem like a stormwater problem, but animal waste is one of the many seemingly small sources of pollution that can add up to big problems for water quality, and even human health.

Animal waste contains two main types of pollutants that harm local waters: nutrients and pathogens. When this waste ends up in water bodies, it decomposes, releasing nutrients that cause excessive growth of algae and weeds. This makes the water murky, green, smelly, and even unusable for swimming, boating, or fishing. The pathogens, disease-causing bacteria and viruses, can also make local waters unswimmable and unfishable, and have caused severe illness in humans.

As you can see, animal waste doesn't simply decompose. So, the easiest way to avoid these problems is to clean up after your pet each and every time, and dispose of the waste properly!



Be Prepared

- Picking up after your pet is easy, if you're prepared. Simply carry a plastic bag with you on every walk with your dog, and you'll have the equipment to remove your dog's waste. Then throw it in the nearest trash can, and you're done! There are even compact, refillable bag dispensers (such as Earth Rated®) that you can attach right to your dog's leash.
- Many parks and recreational areas have courtesy bags and disposal boxes, designed specifically for dog waste. Ask your town to install one in the park you like to visit with your pooch.
- Avoid letting your dog do his business within 200 feet of a water body.
- And of course, never throw dog waste into a storm drain!

Pet Waste At Home

- For dog, cats, and other pets that are meat eaters, it's important to **dispose of the waste in the garbage**. Wastes from meat eaters should not be placed in a compost pile because the parasites, bacteria, and viruses are not readily destroyed during the composting process and can be passed on to humans.
- While it's common courtesy to pick up after your dog when you go on walks, it's also a good idea to **pick up after him at home**. Some diseases can be transmitted from pet waste to humans through contact with the soil. Children playing outside and adults who garden are most at risk. Rhode Island has several "pet waste pick-up" services that will come to your home. Check your local directory for listings.
- If you have large animals, **barnyard and manure management is critical** to the protection of water resources. Please visit our website for information specific to livestock.



Don't Feed The Fowl

Unfortunately, an activity many of us enjoyed as children actually has damaging impacts not only for the waterfowl themselves but also for local waters. While ducks, geese, and swans love to eat the bread we offer them, it lacks the nutrition of their natural diet and can cause long-term health problems.

Feeding waterfowl also causes them to concentrate in higher numbers than they would if they had to rely solely on natural food supplies, and that results in large quantities of waste for local waters! It's also illegal in the state of Rhode Island.

If geese visit your property, you can discourage them by letting a natural buffer grow.