

know where it goes

take simple
steps to reduce
STORMWATER POLLUTION

"Know Where it Goes" Stormwater Poster Narration

The following is a basic outline to be used in conjunction with the stormwater education poster. This is a draft educational module for use with URI's Learning Landscapes program. The poster is intended for use as a visual teaching tool as well as an outreach tool for festivals.

Water Cycle (Use USDA poster of water cycle as visual)

-All of the same water has been here on earth since the dinosaurs were here. It just keeps getting recycled in the water cycle. Can anyone help explain the water cycle? It comes down as precipitation, washes into rivers and out to Narragansett Bay, evaporates and condenses in clouds.

Why do we need water? What do we use water for? What did you eat for breakfast? (Connect what they ate for breakfast to the need for water to grow plants, and for animals and people to drink) Brainstorm about how we depend on water; plants need water to grow, animals eat the plants, and people eat the animals and plants

Now what do you think would happen if we used dirty water to water our plants or use as drinking water?

What is stormwater? (Switch to Stormwater poster as visual)

-Let's Break it down, storm and water. What happens during a storm? Where does all of the water go when it rains? Down the drain! As water travels over the ground to the stormdrain, it picks up pollution. Storm water is basically another word for water pollution. Introduce concepts of point and non-point pollution with older audiences, or briefly touch upon for younger audiences.

I have another question...Does the water that goes down the stormdrain ever get cleaned?

-No, actually this water goes straight to our rivers, ponds and Narragansett Bay. It picks up pollution on the way as it goes.

Can anyone guess what a lawn, a dog, and washing a car have in common?

-All of these are sources of stormwater pollution. As water travels in our neighborhoods it collects pollution from all of these sources. The pollution then enters our waterways. The polluted water can lead to beach closures, fishing bans, shellfishing bans and even fish kills like the one in Greenwich Bay in 2003.

How does the lawn contribute to stormwater pollution?

-People add fertilizers to their lawn. When they water their lawn, the fertilizers go down the drains and into our waterways, essentially adding fertilizer to the Bay.

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This fertilizer causes algae to grow. The algae then start using up the oxygen (when it decomposes) that's in the water.

Now, do fish need oxygen?

-Yes, fish breathe oxygen just like us, only the oxygen is dissolved in the water.

What would happen to the fish if the algae was consuming all of the oxygen?

-If there is no oxygen for the fish to breath, fish and other animals like clams that can't move around can die. One example of this happening was in Greenwich Bay in 2003 (point to picture)

How can we stop lawn fertilizer from becoming stormwater pollution?

-(Turn over picture of grass) We need to make sure that water from the sprinklers stay off of hard surfaces like driveways and the street and stays on the lawn. If it stays on the lawn it will be absorbed and will not run off into the stormdrains. Also, after we mow the lawn we should sweep our driveways so that the clippings don't get washed down the drain.

How do you think a dog contributes to stormwater pollution?

-Dogs and farm animal waste adds bacteria to the water that can make us, and anything living in the water sick. It is also one of the reasons that beaches close. When a high amount of e.coli, a bacteria found in animal waste is found in the water, they must close the beach to protect people who want to swim in the water.

How can we eliminate the pollution from dog waste?

-(Turn over picture of dog) Scoop the poop! Make sure we pick up after our dogs at home and on walks and throw the pet waste in the trash.

How does washing a car contribute to water pollution?

Who here has helped their parents wash their car at home?

Have you watched where the water goes?

-The soapy water and dirt wash down the drain and into our local waterways.

How can we stop pollution from car washing?

- (Turn over picture of car) Wash cars on the lawn or help your parents was the car at a commercial car wash facility where they are required to dispose of their water properly. Buy car wash products that are eco-friendly.

Closing Discussion

The main idea is that we should keep anything harmful out of the stormdrain and to try and make sure water is absorbed in our lawn and does not run off on hard surfaces. What are some other ways that we could reduce stormwater pollution?
-How about litter? Where does your candy bar wrapper end up when you throw it in the street? Throw your trash away.

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- Don't pour anything down the drain.
- Tell your parents to buy eco-friendly cleaning products.
- Use reusable plastic bags because plastic bags end up in the water.

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