

You can help prevent stormwater pollution

Fall is here. With it comes falling leaves, blowing winds, the occasional rainstorm, and perhaps even a “final clean out” of your garage or a change of your car’s oil before the colder weather sets in. These activities and conditions intersect in their effects on our groundwater, giving rise to our municipal efforts for stormwater management.

Stormwater is water from rain and melting snow that does not soak into the ground. As part of the Stormwater Coalition of Monroe County, Pittsford has developed an extensive stormwater management system of drains, detention and retention ponds, created wetlands and pumping stations. Pursuant to the Stormwater Management Program we’ve adopted, Town staffers regularly inspect and maintain this system, cleaning and repairing the drainage system as needed. The Stormwater System is completely separate from our sanitary sewer system. The purpose of it all is to prevent flooding. Our system also improves water quality by circulating and naturally filtering water before returning it to the environment. For our stormwater management system to run effectively, we must keep it free of pollutants and debris.

Our storm sewers and ditches empty water directly into streams and rivers; therefore anything that goes into the catch basin – the grated drains in roadside ditches, low-lying areas, and in roadside concrete gutters – goes back into the environment. Except for some natural filtering described above, it’s not treated. This means that it’s up to each of us to help keep our stormwater free of pollution. Please keep in mind the following year-round guidelines:

- Never pour or dump anything down a storm drain. Soapy, dirty water from washing your car, discarded motor oil, and pet waste are common problems.
- Properly dispose of household hazardous waste (pesticides, fertilizers, paints, etc.). You can do so year round, free of charge, at Monroe County’s ecopark facility, or at our upcoming Household Hazardous Waste and e-Recycling event (see below).
- Use low or no phosphorous lawn fertilizer and the least toxic control methods for weed and pest control, such as pest-resistant plant varieties and hand pulling weeds, whenever able and spot treat problem areas only.
- Clean up pet waste and dispose of it in the trash.
- Check periodically to make sure the drain nearest your home or business is clear of debris – leaves and other yard debris often find their way to the drain and clog it, which can cause pooling and even flooding.
- And finally, encourage your friends and family to do the same!

Preventing stormwater pollution ensures a clean water supply for everyone. Please help to keep Pittsford a leader in stormwater management. For more information on this subject and about how you can protect the quality of our water, you can visit the Water Education Collaborative public information website www.H2OHero.org.

Should you have any comments about the Town’s Stormwater Management program or any other topics, as always please feel free to email me at bsmith@townofpittsford.org or stop by and see me at Town Hall.