

## Northampton's Stormwater System

Northampton has many pipes and drains that move stormwater from rain and snowmelt off of streets, parking lots, sidewalks, and developed areas and deposits it to rivers, brooks, ponds, lakes, wetlands and waterways all over the city. Throughout Northampton, the Department of Public Works (DPW) owns and maintains approximately 4,835 catch basins and inlets that collect the stormwater and more than 114 miles of pipes, drainage channels, and culverts that carry this water and discharge it to more than 326 outfalls throughout the City. Each year the DPW cleans out catch basins, sweeps the streets, and repairs the drainage system, when needed, to keep it functioning cleanly and efficiently.



### *Is stormwater clean?*

The DPW's stormwater system was built to move stormwater off streets and other areas quickly to reduce flooding during rainstorms. It does not clean or treat this water before discharging it. When stormwater flows into a drain, dirt and pollutants from streets and parking lots are carried into the drains and then discharged to a brook, wetland or other water body. Some of the pollutants that commonly get into stormwater are:

- Oil, gasoline, antifreeze, heavy metals and other pollutants from vehicles
- Pet waste
- Fertilizers and pesticides from lawns and gardens
- Dirt and debris from yards and construction areas
- Salt and sand during the winter
- Soaps and detergents from car washing
- Leakage from dumpsters, grease storage, and other garbage storage
- Any other debris that ends up in the roads, parking lots, sidewalks, and other developed areas

#### **For more information:**

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## *What can I do to help clean up stormwater?*

Keeping stormwater clean is up to each of us. Here are a few ways that you can help clean up our stormwater:

- Keep litter, pet waste, leaves, and debris off the roadways and out of storm drains. The DPW cleans the streets and storm drains each year, but we can use your help. Pick up after your pets. If you notice litter or other debris in the street or clogging the drain grates sweep it up and throw it in the trash or call the DPW to report it.
- Apply lawn and garden chemicals sparingly and according to directions. Use natural alternatives to chemical fertilizers and pesticides. If you must use chemicals, test your soil to determine the right amount.
- Dispose of used oil, antifreeze, paints, and other household chemicals properly. The DPW has a Household Hazardous Waste collection day every year in May.
- Clean up spilled brake fluid, oil, grease, and antifreeze. Do not wash them into the street where they will reach local water bodies. Use absorbent material such as kitty litter or speedy dry to contain and clean-up spills, and disposed of it properly. Even better keep your car from leaking in the first place.
- Control soil erosion on your property by planting ground cover and stabilizing erosion-prone areas.
- Participate in neighborhood clean-up activities.
- Don't hose or rake leaves, dirt, sand or trash into the road. Sweep paved areas and dispose of this material in the trash.
- Avoid washing your car at home if the soap drains to the road.
- Be a pollution detective. Call the DPW to report any odd smells from a storm drain or evidence of pollution (garbage, odd smell, discoloration) being discharged out of a pipe.
- Reduce the amount of rainwater and snowmelt running into the street from your property. Divert runoff from pavement, roofs, patios and sump pumps to grassy, gravel, planted or wooded areas of your property, so stormwater can seep slowly into the ground
  - Use rain barrels or cisterns to store extra water to use for irrigation.
  - Build a rain garden to absorb storm water.
  - Use permeable pavers or pavement that allows rain and snowmelt to soak through your driveway and walkways into the ground.

With a little help from everybody we can clean up the stormwater and keep pollution out of the Mill River, Connecticut River, Fitzgerald Lake, and Northampton's many other, brooks, lakes, ponds, and wetlands.