



www.chemungstormwater.org

What is Stormwater?

Stormwater is water from rain or melting snow that doesn't soak into the ground but runs off into waterways. It flows from rooftops, over paved areas and bare soil, and through sloped lawns while picking up a variety of materials on its way. As it flows, stormwater runoff collects and transports soil, animal waste, salt, pesticides, fertilizers, oil and grease, debris and other potential pollutants. The quality of runoff is affected by a variety of factors and depends on the season, local meteorology, geography and upon activities which lie in the path of the flow.

Why should I care?

Unmanaged stormwater damages roads, bridges, private properties and stream banks

Stormwater gathers a variety of pollutants that are mobilized during runoff events. Polluted runoff degrades our lakes, rivers, wetland and other waterways. Transported soil clouds the waterway and interferes with the habitat of fish and plant life.

Nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen can promote the overgrowth of algae, deplete oxygen in the waterway and be harmful to other aquatic life. Toxic chemicals from automobiles, sediment from construction activities and careless application of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers threaten the health of the receiving waterway and can kill fish and other aquatic life. Bacteria from animal wastes and illicit connections to sewerage systems can make nearby lakes and bays unsafe for wading, swimming and the propagation of edible shellfish. According to an inventory conducted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), half of the impaired waterways are affected by urban/suburban and construction sources of stormwater runoff.

In the Southern Tier, stormwater runoff is a key source of pollution.

Polluted runoff can create environmental & public health and safety problems. Polluted stormwater is one of the Nation's greatest threats to clean water.

Pollutants in urban runoff

- sediment
- thermal energy
- nutrients
- oxygen-demanding substances
- toxic substances
- pathogens

What can we do as Homeowners to offset the effects of stormwater?

First we have to understand how we contribute to the problem.

Did you know a 1,000 sq. ft. roof with a 1 inch rain event can produce 600 gallons of water?

And, if you have 4 downspouts – 1 at each corner of the building you will get 155 gallons of water from each downspout.

How do you calculate this figure? It is very simple

Take the Sq. footage of your roof then multiply it by .6 to get the amount of roof runoff

This is for a rain fall of 1 inch.

Roof runoff is a key contributor to the problem; while we certainly can't shrink the size of our roofs, we can reduce the runoff problem.

Start with a simple walk about your property. Besides the roof, identify the other sources of stormwater runoff as well. Below are some simple suggestions to mitigate your stormwater runoff.

- ❖ Redirect your downspouts to pervious areas such as lawns and gardens
- ❖ Direct the runoff to low-impact practices such as Rain Barrels or Rain Gardens.
- ❖ Your driveway may be dirt and gravel, but over time your driveway soils will compact down and become an impervious surface. Stormwater runoff should not be directed to your driveway.
- ❖ Stormwater flowing over your lawn will go into your road ditch. Be certain the volume and velocity of the stormwater is at the rate your road ditch can handle. For questions about stormwater runoff going into your road ditch, contact your highway superintendant.

The Rural Stormwater Coalition of Chemung, Schuyler & Steuben Counties has a rain barrel and rain garden program. For more information on what you can do – please contact

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