

# CLEAN WATER NJ

## WHAT IS STORMWATER POLLUTION?

Water from rain and melting snow that flows over lawns, parking lots and streets is known as stormwater runoff. This water, which travels along gutters, into catch basins and through storm drain pipes and ditches, usually is not treated, but then flows or is discharged into local waterbodies. Along the way, the stormwater picks up trash, toxins and other pollutants. This polluted stormwater can kill fish and other wildlife, destroy wildlife habitat, contaminate drinking water sources and force the closing of beaches because of health threats to swimmers.

Human activity is largely responsible for the stormwater pollution. Everything that we put on the ground or into the storm drain can end up in our water. Each of us has a responsibility to make sure these contaminants stay out of our water.

## SO, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### IN THE HOME:

- Shop for nonhazardous, biodegradable and phosphorous-free household cleaning products.
- If you use water-based paints, rinse paint brushes in the sink. If you use oil-based paints, you can filter and reuse the thinner used to clean the brushes. Dispose of thinner through a local hazardous waste program.
- Sweep up dirt and debris and discard on your lawn or in the trash. Hosing off pavement washes pollutants into storm drains, which may lead to local creeks, bays and the ocean.
- Keep trash cans closed to prevent trash from scattering.
- If you use hazardous substances such as paints, solvents and cleaners, use them sparingly and according to the directions. Store properly to avoid spills.
- If you are working on a home improvement project, dispose of drywall and hardened concrete and mortar in the trash. Do not rinse concrete or mortar from a bucket into the street; dilute the mixture with water and rinse it into an area with vegetation or gravel.
- Never pour hazardous materials into the street, sewer or storm drain.

