

## Stormwater Quiz: True or False?

- Biodegradable soap is safe.** False.

Some biodegradable soap contains phosphates which help the algae population to grow rapidly. This leads to the death of aquatic plants and starves fish of oxygen. Degreasers can strip fish of oils causing scales to break apart.

- Pet waste is natural.** False.

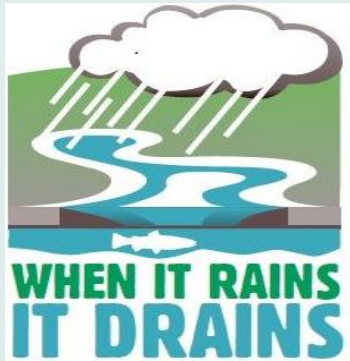
Pet waste contains nitrates and bacteria. If leached into surface water it reduces oxygen and changes nutrient levels endangering aquatic life

- Yard clippings are natural and degrade in water.** False.

Contamination from pesticides and nitrates on the clippings can contaminate rivers. Pipes become clogged and can cause local flooding.

- Cigarette butts biodegrade.** False.

Cigarette butts are not biodegradable. They harm our ecosystem and contain more than 165 chemicals



Sources: EPA and general web search

## A wastewater system and a stormwater system are not the same.

- Water** and waste from sinks and toilets travel to a wastewater treatment plant where it is treated and filtered.
- Stormwater** systems carry water that flows into gutters from driveways and streets directly to the river, this water is not treated

**Anything that enters a stormwater sewer system is discharged, untreated into the water used for swimming, for fishing and for drinking.**

- There are many pollutants that enter storm water systems.**

Some common contaminants include: cigarette butts, yard debris, motor oil, pesticides, brake dust, pet waste, paint and household chemicals.

Rain takes oil and grit left by cars and sprinklers wash pesticides, fertilizers and weed killers from our garden and lawns into the storm water system.

Detergents, oils and grease from washing the car make runoff dirty.

- The effects of pollutants on our water can be harmful**

Polluted runoff can have harmful effects on sources for drinking water, recreational use and wildlife. It is important to keep runoff free from pollutants



## 10 Things You Can Do to Prevent Stormwater Runoff Pollution

- Use fertilizers sparingly and sweep up driveways, sidewalks, and roads
- Never dump anything down storm drains
- Vegetate bare spots in your yard
- Compost your yard waste
- Avoid pesticides; learn about Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Direct downspouts away from paved surfaces
- Take your car to the car wash instead of washing it in the driveway
- Check car for leaks, and recycle motor oil
- Pick up after your pet
- Have your septic tank pumped regularly