

# POLLUTED STORMWATER RUNOFF

## Factsheet for Builders and Developers



After it rains, water flows off our yards, streets, parking lots, and driveways into the storm drains, and eventually into our streams, lakes, and bays. Unfortunately, this runoff picks up pollutants that flow directly into our local waterways. These pollutants can include soil, motor oil, pesticides, fertilizers, pet waste, and litter. Many people mistakenly think that the water entering from our storm drains is cleaned or treated in some way. On the contrary, our storm drain systems channel water directly into our creeks. If our runoff water and stormwater is contaminated, it can become a major source of water pollution. This factsheet series is broken into seven different user groups who can help prevent stormwater from becoming polluted.

**Builders/Developers**

**Gardeners/Homeowners**

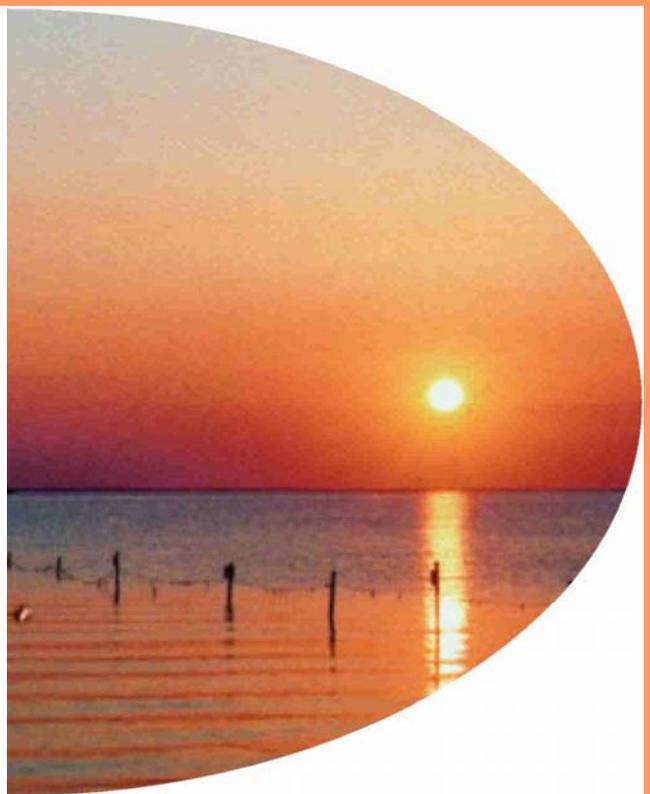
**Automotive Businesses**

**Restaurants**

**Car Owners**

**Pet Owners**

**Pool Owners**



# FACTSHEET FOR BUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS

## Polluted Stormwater Runoff

### Builders

Many of the materials that we use in our home improvement projects have the potential to pollute stormwater, if not disposed of properly. Materials like paint, wood chips, sawdust, stucco, drywall, dirt, concrete, and chemicals, if washed down a storm drain, contaminate our creeks, rivers, and bays.

*Paint:* Painting tools should never be rinsed out in the street or any area that might flow to the stream. If you use a water-based paint, wash all paint brushes, pans and other equipment in a sink. Remember that solvents can only be disposed of at a hazardous waste collection site.

*Dirt:* If you must temporarily remove soil, make sure to leave it in a contained, covered area where it cannot be tracked all over the street.

*Building Materials:* Materials and equipment that require application and cleansing with water such as grout, gypsum, drywall mud, plaster, or stucco cannot be rinsed into a storm drain. Dispose of these materials properly by replacing the lid and putting them in dumpsters with water tight lids.

*Concrete and Mortar Projects:* Don't mix up more fresh concrete or mortar than you will need for a project. Protect dry material from wind and rain by covering. Never rinse washout into a stormwater pond or swale. Dump it into a pit, let it harden, and dispose of it properly.

*Spills:* If an accidental spill of any liquid building material or other hazardous waste occurs, absorbent materials such as kitty litter must be applied immediately to prevent the spill from entering the storm drain. For larger spills, be sure to contact the DNREC Emergency Response Team at 1-800-662-8802 or DNREC's Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Branch at (302) 739-9403.

### Developers

When land is graded for a new development project, whether it is a park, house, or shopping center, our local environment is affected. As the natural vegetation is cleared, soil is exposed and is more susceptible to the forces of erosion. This soil is then carried into our stormwater systems and directly into our creeks, streams, and bays. Sediment that is introduced to a stream has been shown to kill fish, smother fish eggs, and destroy aquatic habitat. Here are a few tips to protecting our natural resources during development.

*Planning and Scheduling:* Grading and clearing should be phased to reduce sediment exposure of bare soil and erosion potential. In the State of Delaware, no more than 20 acres can be exposed at any given time.

*Erosion Control:* Preserving existing vegetation protects the soil surface and greatly reduces the amount of erosion. Use geotextiles where necessary, and be sure to mulch and plant new vegetation as soon as possible. Most importantly, follow the erosion and sediment control plan that has been developed for the site.

*Sediment Control:* Use controls such as earthen dikes, silt fence, and storm drain inlet protection according to the approved sediment and stormwater plan for the site.

*Education:* All land disturbing activities greater than 5,000 square feet in the State of Delaware must have one person on site at all times who has taken the Contractor's Certification class. For more information on becoming certified, please contact the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control's Sediment and Stormwater Program at (302) 739-9921.