

# POLLUTED STORMWATER RUNOFF

## Factsheet for Pet Owners



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**

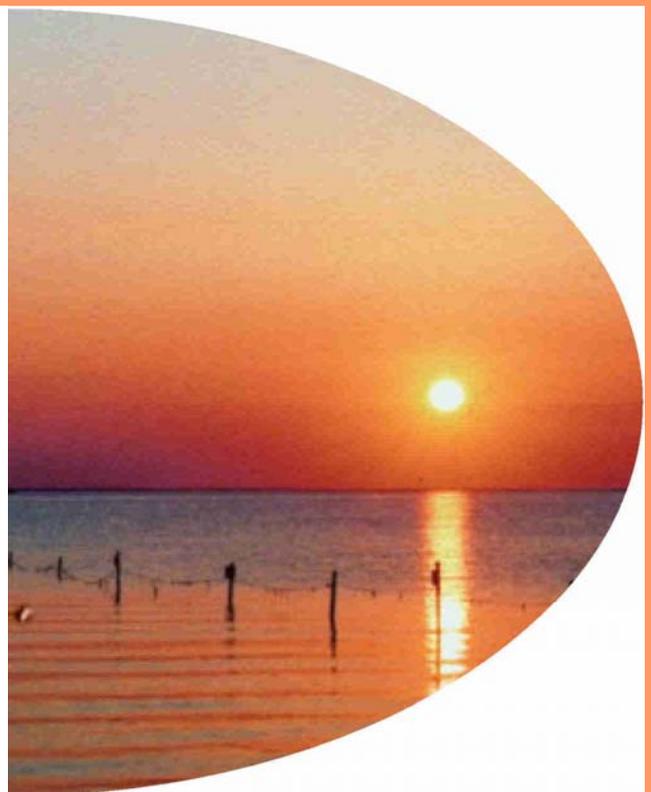
**Automotive Businesses**

**Restaurants**

**Car Owners**

**Pet Owners**

**Pool Owners**



# FACTSHEET FOR PET OWNERS

## Polluted Stormwater Runoff

Pet waste is a health risk to pets and people, especially to children. It's a nuisance in our neighborhoods, and can negatively affect our waterways and our recreational activities, such as swimming. Pet waste is full of bacteria that can make people sick. This bacteria gets washed into the storm drains and ends up in our creeks, in our oceans, and on our beaches. The bacteria also can end up in shellfish living in these bodies of water. People who eat these shellfish may become very sick.

Studies show that dog and cat waste can contribute up to 25% of the harmful bacteria found in our local waterways. You can help keep our creeks, rivers, and bays clean by following these helpful tips.

1. Carry a plastic bag when you walk pets and be sure to pick up after them.
2. Clean up pet waste in your yard. This waste can easily wash into local waterways during a heavy rainstorm.
3. Pick up after your pets before mowing the lawn or cleaning patios, driveways, and other hard surface areas. Never hose pet waste into the streets or gutter.

The best way to dispose of pet waste is to flush it down the toilet because it gets treated by a sewage treatment plant or septic system. Other disposal methods for pet waste include sealing it in a bag and placing it in the trash, or burying small quantities in your yard to decompose. If you choose this option, be sure to keep it away from vegetable gardens.

### Let's Review (1 - 2 - 3)

1. Bring a bag
2. Clean it up
3. Dispose of waste