

# Ways to Protect Water!

Everyone needs to do their part to protect our streams, rivers, inland lakes, and Lake Michigan! We depend on these water resources for our drinking water and for recreation: swimming, boating, and fishing.

## How do pollutants enter the water?

- In urban areas storm drains are a main source of pollutants, draining virtually everything from lawns, streets, and parking lots directly into local streams, rivers, and lakes. Most storm drains do not treat or filter pollutants.
- Common pollutants include; fertilizers, pesticides, grass clippings, leaves, oil, grease, toxic chemicals, sediment, and pet waste.

## Simple Steps to Protect our Water



- **Properly Dispose of Household Hazardous Waste.** Never dump items such as motor oil, fuel products, cleaners, paints, pharmaceuticals, and pesticides on the ground or down the drain. They can contaminate groundwater and surface water. Check with your county on free collection or drop off dates.
- **Limit Fertilizer Use.** During watering or rainstorms, unnecessary phosphorus applied to lawns is washed into street storm drains, which empty directly into local waterways. Get a soil test at a MSU Extension Office to see what amenities your soil or lawn needs. It's the law to use no-phosphorus fertilizer!
- **Maintain Your Septic System.** If you have a septic system, have it checked and pumped every 2-3 years to insure it is working properly.
- **Close Abandoned Wells.** Close any abandoned wells on your property. They can act as conduits for contamination of groundwater.
- **Only Rain in the Storm Drain.** Rainwater and snow melt is the only thing that should wash down our storm drains. Anything else grass clippings, leaves, motor oil, even fertilizer is considered an **ILLICIT DISCHARGE.**
- **Pollution Emergency Alerting System (PEAS).** In case of environmental emergency affecting air, land, water, wetlands, dams, or public drinking water supplies call: 1-800-292-4706

For more information on what you can do for water quality visit: [www.swmpc.org/what\\_can\\_i\\_do.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/what_can_i_do.asp)