

SAGINAW AREA STORMWATER AUTHORITY (SASWA)

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE – WINTER 2015

KEEPING OUR WATER RESOURCES CLEAN

Did you know urban stormwater runoff is one of our nation's largest contributors of pollution to rivers, lakes and streams? There are many causes for this pollution, leaking vehicles, spills in parking lots, people dumping pollutants into storm drains and many other sources we may not think about. For example:

Almost everyone enjoys their pets, they are our companions, and they help us get through the day to day stresses by providing their companionship and unconditional acceptance of our strengths and weaknesses. But some day to day activities we do with our pets can create problems with water quality. For example, if you own a dog in an urban or suburban area, the dog needs to get out and take care of daily "business". As a responsible pet owner it is our duty to clean up after our pet has "deposited" something on the lawn, street, park, or sidewalk. Be a good neighbor and responsible pet owner by picking up after your pet and placing their "scat" in either the garbage or flush it down your toilet where it can go either to a landfill, or a wastewater treatment plant. **DO NOT** put pet waste in street catchbasins where stormwater drains. The catchbasins in almost all areas of Saginaw County discharge directly to our area rivers and eventually out to Saginaw Bay. We fish in these waters, boat in these waters and swim in these waters, please don't pollute our water resources. Storm Drains are for stormwater only, nothing else is permitted.

You may think that your pet's waste, by itself, won't impact the Saginaw Bay, or the area rivers, but it does. If one person is disposing of pet waste in a storm drain, that is too many. We all need to do our part to protect our water resources. The communities and counties in our Great Lakes Bay Region are spending or have spent millions of dollars to clean up stormwater and prevent discharges of untreated wastewater to our rivers and the Saginaw Bay. Yes, there are still discharges reported in the newspapers after rain events, but those discharges are of "treated" wastewater which must meet water quality standards established in Michigan. These standards are typically more stringent than federal requirements. Municipalities and Industry must have stormwater and industrial permits to regulate their discharges into our rivers and the Saginaw Bay. Dumping pet wastes into storm drainage systems is a violation of the public health code, local zoning ordinances and ultimately a violation of the laws of our state to prevent pollution of our water resources. So please do your part, pick up after your pet and dispose of their wastes in a responsible manner. Do your "Bit for the Bay". Keep our stormwater drainage systems clean!