

Be RiverSmart, Illinois!

People may not realize that we are all watershed residents and our everyday activities can impact water quality in our own backyard and further downstream. It is up to all of us to do our part to reduce pollution, like oils, grease, nutrients and silt, in our watershed to keep our rivers and streams clean.

Photo By: Ralph Frese



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A watershed is a particular area of land. Because of the slope of the land, water drains off the land into small channels, then into larger streams, and eventually into the river which gives the watershed its name. The largest source of water pollution in Illinois - called nonpoint source pollution - is carried into our streams by stormwater from rain events in the watershed. This source of pollution can be reduced, if not entirely prevented, by actions of individuals.

**There are many easy things that
we can do in our daily life to
protect our local rivers,
streams, and watershed.**

www.prairierivers.org

Be RiverSmart!

**You can make a difference, at home, at work, and in your community!
Here are 19 things you can do to protect water quality and your local stream:**

Conserve water at home

- ◆ Repair leaky faucets or toilets right away. Leaks can waste 50 gallons of water a day.
- ◆ Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth, shaving, or washing dishes. This can save 3-5 gallons a day.
- ◆ Install low flow toilets to save 3-5 gallons per flush.
- ◆ Install water saving showerheads. Outdated showerheads waste 20 gallons of water a day.
- ◆ When you need a new washing machine, buy one that uses less water. This will save you money and help our rivers.
- ◆ Only run your dish washer or washing machine when they are full.
- ◆ Water your lawn and garden only in the morning or evening.
- ◆ Avoid using pesticides and fertilizers at your home.
- ◆ On your farm, develop nutrient management plans and follow University of Illinois Extension guidelines for fertilizers and pesticides.
- ◆ Buy and use environmentally friendly products and alternatives (avoid chlorine, phosphates and solvents).
- ◆ Dispose of household cleaners, paint, and other chemicals safely. Never dump them down the storm drain.
- ◆ Plant a tree (or two). Trees can reduce many pollutants associated with rainfall runoff, holding soil in place, and slowing down stormwater. Planting and keeping trees along stream corridors will protect water quality and help to re-establish forested wetlands.



Control pollution from your home

- ◆ Fix car leaks promptly.
- ◆ Dispose of oil and anti-freeze safely, never dump it down the storm drain. A quart of oil can contaminate up to two million gallons of drinking water or create an eight acre oil slick, while antifreeze can poison wildlife.
- ◆ Properly maintain your septic tank.
- ◆ Sweep off the driveway, patio or sidewalk, instead of hosing it off with water. This conserves water and prevents run-off of contaminants into our rivers.
- ◆ Compost or recycle your yard waste, don't let it wash down the storm drain.

Get to know your local watershed and river conservation group

- ◆ Enjoy opportunities to recreate with your family - fishing, paddling, hunting, hiking and birdwatching - along Illinois' rivers and streams.
- ◆ Join a local watershed or statewide river conservation organization, and get involved in activities such as river cleanups, storm drain stenciling, water quality monitoring, or education. Go to www.prairierivers.org for more information.

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Materials derived from River Network's RiverSmart Campaign (www.riversmart.org)