



Why does Stormwater Matter???

Everything you see and a lot that you cannot see laying in the gutters, ditches, or on the street is carried into the storm drains and ultimately into local rivers, streams, and lakes through rain or melting snow. Polluted stormwater runoff can cause significant adverse affects on the environment including plants, fish, animals, and people. As noted above, if it is not entirely made up of stormwater, it should not go down the storm drain.

WHY?...

- Sediment can cloud the water, inhibiting the growth of aquatic plants and animals, and destroying the habitat.
- Bacteria and other pathogens can wash into swimming and fishing areas and create health hazards.
- Litter such as plastic bags, six pack rings, bottles, and cigarette butts that are washed into our water bodies reduce the water quality and can cause serious harm to aquatic animals.

- Household hazardous wastes like insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil, and other chemical fluids if not disposed of properly can poison aquatic life.
- People can become sick from ingestion of diseased fish or polluted water.

This [educational video](#) about Stormwater was created by the Tennessee Stormwater Association.

Is Stormwater a problem?

It can be. The volume of runoff from an impervious area (roadway, parking lot, etc.) is greater than that from an undisturbed green space (forest, field, etc.). The increased volume of stormwater flows to our small creeks and streams and overloads them causing stream bank erosion. This can lead to property loss and damage of nearby utilities. In addition, the runoff of stormwater in developed areas carries pollutants such as trash, oil, grease, bacteria, heavy metals, increased sediment loads, and increased temperatures into the very waters that Bradley county uses for recreation and drinking water supplies.

You can do a lot to help minimize stormwater problems!

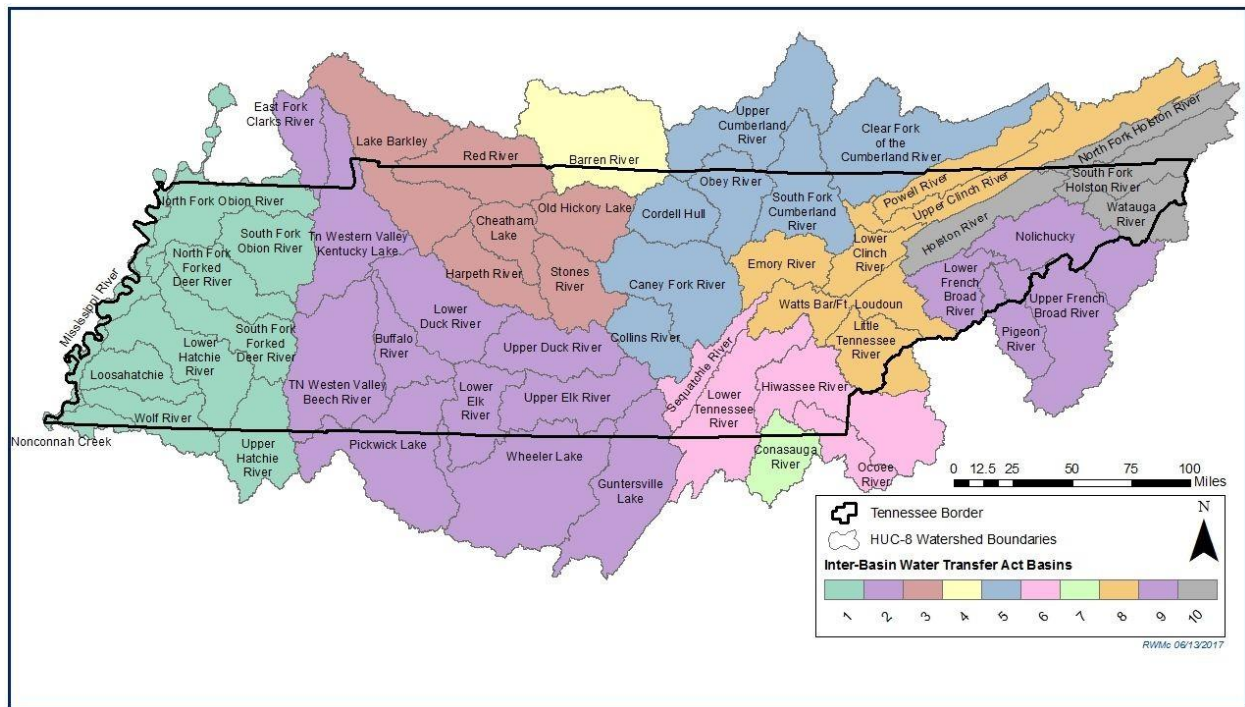
- * Use fertilizers sparingly and sweep up driveways, sidewalks, and roads.
- * Perform routine maintenance to your property's detention or [retention pond](#).
- * Never dump anything down storm drains or divert to pavement that flows to them.
- * Plant grass or plants on the bare spots in your yard.
- * Do not mow to the stream bank.
- * Leave a buffer and riparian area to filter and protect streams.
- * Compost your yard waste. Leave grass clippings on the lawn for extra nutrients.
- * Direct downspouts away from paved surfaces, and when possible collect rainwater for reuse in rain barrels.
- * Take your car to the car wash or wash on the lawn instead of in the driveway or on paved surfaces.
- * Repair vehicle leaks, recycle motor oil, take chemicals and pharmaceuticals to collection events.
- * Pick up your pet waste.
- * Have your septic tank pumped and system inspected regularly.

What is a watershed?

It's a land area that channels rainfall and snowmelt to creeks, streams, and rivers, and eventually to outflow points such as reservoirs, bays, and the ocean.

Source: [NOAA](#)

TN Watershed map courtesy of [TDEC](#)



How Is the Health of A Waterway?

How's My Waterway answers questions about the health of waters in supporting swimming, the eating of fish, drinking water protection and delivery, the health of aquatic communities, and the restoration and protection of waterways. The public has access to water information in their community, state and at a national level.

You can locate all of that and so much more on the EPA's website

here: <https://mywaterway.epa.gov/community>

DID YOU KNOW...

Sediment can degrade water quality for people, animals, and fish in multiple ways. Sediment can clog stormwater drains and increase flooding; sediment can make water treatment more expensive and it can change the taste and odor; sediments can clog fish gills and thereby increase disease; sediment can accumulate on the bottom where it smothers and disrupts benthic, or bottom, organisms and habitats; sediment can be suspended in the water column where it reduces the water clarity necessary for growth of submerged aquatic vegetation and disrupts predator/prey dynamics in fish; sediment can carry nutrients that activate blue-green algae to release toxins, making the water unsafe for swimming; sediments can alter the flow of water and reduce water depth making fishing and boating more difficult or impossible.

Excess sedimentation is also increased by stream bank erosion, from neglect or development, lack of regulation and enforcement, and poor construction site management, even from minor home improvement projects like room additions or yard landscaping.

[Sediment Pollution VIDEO](#)