UNDERSTANDING STORMWATER AND HEALTHY WATERSHEDS
A COMMUNITY GUIDE
Rain falls in a watershed, then moves through the landscape.

In natural areas, water mainly soaks into the ground to refresh the ecosystem.

In built environments, water can't reach the soil through hard surfaces.

Water that falls in built environments is called stormwater.

Engineers build pipes and other structures to channel stormwater to nearby waterways.
As water flows over hard surfaces it picks up and carries whatever is in its path.

Stormwater can carry erosion + pollutants like:

- Gasoline
- Motor oil
- Road salt
- Salt
- Weeds
- Garbage
- Fertilizers
- Weed killers

Retention ponds are a common way to manage stormwater.

They help deal with pollutants and excess water flow.
Stormwater is channeled through a system of pipes to an artificial pond.

Fast-moving water slows as it enters the pond.

Pollutants and sediment settle to the bottom of the pond, and clearer water continues flowing downstream.
Over time the pond fills with sediment and no longer functions properly.

Overloaded sediment and nutrients can be carried into rivers and lakes.

When this happens, pond sediment has to be dredged and removed.

After dredging, disturbed areas are restored with native plantings.
HOW CAN YOU HELP?
BE A CITIZEN OF YOUR WATERSHED

MANY THINGS END UP IN STORMWATER THAT CAN BE CARRIED INTO NATURAL WATERWAYS

- WEED KILLERS
- FERTILIZER
- SALT
- LAWN CLIPPINGS
- LEAVES
- PET WASTE

THIS CAN CAUSE ALGAE BLOOMS AND OTHER UNHEALTHY CONDITIONS

YOU CAN HELP KEEP LEAVES OUT OF GUTTERS AND STORM DRAINS

PICK UP PET WASTE AND USE FEWER CHEMICALS IN YOUR LANDSCAPE
If we work together, we can keep our watersheds healthy. Rain barrels capture and store stormwater you can use in your garden. At home, you can make landscaping changes to conserve water. Rain gardens catch water so it can soak into the soil. These changes reduce the amount of stormwater that flows into our wetlands, lakes and rivers.

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