

# Storm Water Runoff and Water Quality Website

## Town of Oyster Bay



### WHAT IS STORM WATER RUNOFF?

Storm water runoff is generated when precipitation from rain and snowmelt flows over the land and does not soak into the ground. This runoff ultimately flows untreated into our beaches, lakes, rivers, ponds, canals and coastal waters.

The Town maintains a storm water drainage system that consists of the grate or curb openings that you see along Town roads and in parking lots, which are called storm drains or catch basins. These catch basins collect the storm water runoff from the streets transmitting it through a network of pipes to numerous storm water outfalls throughout the Town. These outfalls can empty into recharge basins inland or surface waters along the Town's north and south shorelines. Were the Town not to have this storm drain system, then streets and property could flood every time it rains or freeze during the winter storms.

### HOW DOES STORM WATER RUNOFF AFFECT WATER QUALITY?

As storm water flows over the land – particularly over impervious surfaces such as side walks, streets, parking lots and building roofs, as well as lawns and construction sites – it accumulates pollutants such as debris, chemicals, pesticides, fertilizers, oil, sediment, and bacteria. These pollutants can harm the quality of the water body that it ultimately flows into because storm water is not treated in the storm water drainage system. This could affect our enjoyment of beaches, fishing and other water related activities due to the pollution and contamination. In addition, storm water pollution could adversely affect the fish, clams, oysters and water fowl that are dependent upon these water bodies for their survival.

### WHAT IS THE TOWN DOING TO HELP?

Under regulations implemented by the Federal Clean Water Act, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) required municipalities, including the Town of Oyster Bay, to implement programs and practices that would help minimize storm water pollution.

In 2003, the Town of Oyster Bay was one of the first municipalities in New York to initiate its Storm Water Management Program (SWMP). The goal of the Town's SWMP is to reduce the impacts of storm water runoff thereby improving water quality, enhancing the recreational enjoyment of our waterways, preventing beach closures and ensuring that seafood is safe for human consumption. This SWMP is a permitted program (called a Storm Water Discharge Permit) implemented by the NYSDEC as delegated by the USEPA.

The Town's SWMP includes the following six mandated program areas:

1. Public education and outreach about storm water impacts
2. Public involvement and participation
3. Illicit discharge detection and elimination
4. Construction site storm water runoff control
5. Post-construction storm water management
6. Pollution prevention and good housekeeping for municipal operations

Each year the Town is required to report to the NYSDEC the progress it is making in each of these program areas. The Town of Oyster Bay's annual report is available to the public on this website, as well as Town Halls North and South, in May each year for review and comment prior to its submission to the NYSDEC.

The following are some specific examples of what the Town of Oyster Bay is doing:

- Amended the Town Code to include new Chapter 181 Prohibition of Illicit Discharges, Activities and Connections to the Town of Oyster Bay Separate Storm Drain System and new Chapter 204 Storm Water Management and Erosion and Sediment Control
- Made available informational pamphlets at Town facilities and on the Town's website related to Storm Water Pollution Prevention, catch basins and sumps; coastal and marine resources; recycling; S.T.O.P (Stop Throwing Out Pollutants) and S.O.R.T. (Separate Oyster Bay's Recyclables Today) programs; the Town's boat waste pumpout facilities; pet waste; and more.

- Encourages residents' participation through environmental events including beach cleanups, dune grass planting to preserve the dunes and beaches, and school programs such as Marine Education Day.
- Mandated pet waste clean-up as part of the Town Code Chapter 103 which requires that dog waste must be immediately removed from the street in a plastic bag.
- Spearheaded the formation of the Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee whose intent is to improve water quality, protect water resources, and protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitats. The Town is also an active participant in the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee.
- Evaluated Town municipal operations to ensure that best management practices are employed in Town facilities to prevent the discharge of pollutants.



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

First: It is important to keep pollutants and their sources away from clean rain water, snow melt and irrigation water.

Second: Be Proactive! If you see someone dumping something into a catch basin, liquids or oils or a pipe flowing down a driveway into the street, or other such suspicious actions, report it by calling: Town's 24-hour Operations Center at (516) 677-5757.

Here are a number of other ways you can help protect our local water bodies from storm water pollution:

- Use fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides sparingly; follow manufacturer's directions precisely.
- Never dump anything in catch basins or in the street.
- Do not drain your pool into the street.
- Do not drain your washing machine into the street, unless a test kit does not detect chlorine levels.
- Pick up after your pet and don't throw it in the catch basin
- Sweep driveways, sidewalks and gutters. Do not wash down with water.
- Vegetate bare spots in your yard.
- Direct downspouts away from paved surfaces; consider a rain garden or rain barrel to capture runoff.
- Wash your car on your lawn, not driveways, or take it to a commercial car wash, where the wash water is cleaned and recycled.
- Check your car for leaks and recycle your motor oil.
- Have your septic tank pumped and inspected regularly, by a professional.
- Mulch leaves and lawn clippings.
- Keep the catch basins in front of your house or business free of debris and leaves.

## WHERE CAN YOU GET MORE INFORMATION?

Check back at this website as we will be updating it periodically. Informative Town brochures and pamphlets can be found by clicking on the links below:

- Catch Basins & Sumps
- Coastal & Marine Resources
- Composting
- Don't Dump – Use the Town's Waste Pumpout Facility
- Grass Recycling – Join the Mulcher Culture
- Hazardous Material Alternatives for Your Household
- Recycling Ranger (children)
- S.O.R.T. Recycling
- S.T.O.P. & E-Waste Recycling Program
- Storm Water Brochure

The following websites also provide valuable information:

- United States Environmental Protection Agency  
[http://cfpub1.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program\\_id=6](http://cfpub1.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program_id=6)
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation  
[www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8468.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8468.html)
- Nassau County  
[www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/DPW/stormwater.html](http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/DPW/stormwater.html)
- Friends of the Bay – Oyster Bay  
[www.friendsofthebay.org/](http://www.friendsofthebay.org/)
- South Shore Estuary Reserve  
[www.estuary.cog.ny.us/index.html](http://www.estuary.cog.ny.us/index.html)
- Center for Watershed Protection <http://www.cwp.org/your-watershed-101/stormwater-management.html>

