

MANAGING STORMWATER RUNOFF IN PORT JEFFERSON

What is stormwater runoff?

In urban and suburban areas, much of the land surface is covered by buildings and pavement, which prevent rain and snowmelt from naturally soaking into the ground. Most developed areas rely on storm drains to collect the stormwater runoff to reduce flooding.



Nearly 900 storm drains, such as this one on Myrtle Avenue in Port Jefferson, are located throughout the Village.

Why is stormwater runoff a problem?

Stormwater runoff can pick up debris, chemicals, oils, dirt, road salts, pet waste, and other pollutants. Unlike sanitary sewers, anything that enters the Village's storm sewer system is discharged untreated into Port Jefferson Harbor, Old Mill Creek, Old Mill Pond, Mt. Sinai Harbor, or recharge basins. Pollution effects from polluted stormwater runoff include:

- Bacteria and other pathogens can wash into swimming and shellfishing areas and create health hazards, often making closures of these areas necessary.
- Debris, such as plastic bags, bottles, and cigarette butts, end up in the Harbors and pollute our beaches and can choke, suffocate, or injure marine life.
- Sediment can cloud the water and destroy marine habitats.
- Toxins from chemicals accumulate in fish and shellfish, and people can become sick or die from eating diseased fish or shellfish.

This is one of over 20 outfall pipes that discharge storm water into local waterways. This particular outfall is located on the Danford's bulkhead in Port Jefferson Harbor.



What the Village is Doing

The Village of Port Jefferson has filed a Stormwater Management Plan with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation that describes what the Village will be doing each year to meet the requirements of the Phase 2 Stormwater Management Program by 2008. Among the requirements, the Village has:

- Began a stormwater education and awareness program in the Port Jefferson school district.
- Mapped storm drains throughout the Village and discharge locations to Port Jefferson Harbor.
- Conducted stormwater education training for required Village employees.
- Identified and eliminated sources of illegal discharges into the storm drain system.
- Improved operations in the Highway and Parks Departments to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff.
- Revised Village Codes to require that builders better manage storm water runoff from building lots.

What Businesses Can Do

Dirt, oil, and debris that collect in parking lots and on sidewalks can be washed into the storm sewer system and eventually into Port Jefferson Harbor.

- Sweep up litter and debris from sidewalks, driveways, and parking lots, especially around storm drains. Don't sweep the litter and debris into the storm drains.
- Cover grease storage and dumpsters and keep them clean.
- Report oil and fuel spills to the Village Highway Department. They'll know how to clean it up.

What Builders Can Do

Erosion controls that are not maintained can cause excessive amounts of sediment and debris to be carried into the storm sewer system. Construction vehicles can leak fuel, oil, and other harmful fluids that can be picked up by stormwater and flow into the Harbors.

- Divert stormwater away from disturbed or exposed areas of the construction site.
- Install silt fences, vehicle mud removal areas, and other sediment and erosion controls and properly maintain them, especially after rainstorms.
- Prevent soil erosion by minimizing disturbed areas during construction projects and properly maintain them, especially after rainstorms.

What Homeowners Can Do

Recycle or properly dispose of household products that contain chemicals, such as insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil, or other automotive fluids. Don't pour them onto the ground or into the storm drains.

- Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly. Use organic mulch or safer pest control methods whenever possible.
- Compost or mulch yard waste. Don't leave it in the street or sweep it into storm drains.
- When walking your pet, remember to pick up the waste and dispose of it properly.
- Use a commercial car wash that treats or recycles its wastewater, or wash your car on your yard so the water infiltrates into the ground.
- Repair leaks and dispose of used auto fluids and batteries at designated drop-off or recycling locations.
- Don't use a water hose to clean your driveway. Use a broom to sweep up debris and sand and don't sweep it into storm drains.

This friendly reminder is located on Foxdale Lane on the Port Jefferson / East Setauket border.



For More Information

Village of Port Jefferson
<http://www.portjeff.com/stormwater.html>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program_id=6

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