

Stormwater Management



This flyer has been developed to provide the Portsmouth Water Division's customers with information about how stormwater is managed and suggested steps that individuals can take to protect and improve water quality.

What is stormwater?

Stormwater is precipitation that runs over the land surface (runoff) and does not infiltrate the ground. In the process it may pick up pollutants and deposit them into surface waters (rivers, lakes and oceans), which may create water quality impacts and siltation that could potentially damage aquatic habitats.



Why should we care?

Stormwater pollution creates water quality impacts to swimming, boating and aquatic habitats that can be mitigated or prevented with awareness and new approaches to stormwater management. These pollutants tend to come from eroding soils, fertilizers and lawn chemicals, pet waste, and trash and debris. As a result of stormwater and the increase in volume of surface waters, flooding can also occur. With flooding comes property and infrastructure damages.

In the past, stormwater has been managed with the goals of controlling erosion and flooding, but the conventional approach has not been successful in either protecting water quality or accommodating flood waters. Recent changes in state and federal programs – and to some extent in local programs – recognize the shortcomings of the conventional approach and lay a course for a more up-to-date approach that can preserve both water quality and pre-development hydrologic conditions. The new approach employs tools such as low impact development techniques and stormwater utilities. Using these tools, it is possible to maintain water quality, ecosystem health and groundwater resources.

– New Hampshire Water Resources Primer (2008)

How can you help?

- Never pour hazardous materials into a storm drain
- Dispose of used motor oil, gasoline, antifreeze, cleaning agents, pesticides or fertilizers, paint and other hazardous agents in an appropriate manner - such as taking them to Household Hazardous Waste Days (held twice a year at Portsmouth's Department of Public Works)
- Do not sweep litter, sand, leaves or other materials into storm drains. Dispose of them in the trash or compost the material
- Never hose down a spill into a storm drain. Use absorbent towels or cat litter to clean up the spill and dispose of the material in the trash if it is not hazardous
- Detergents and chemical cleaners should not be used to wash sidewalks or driveways
- If you see a storm drain that is clogged please contact your respective Public Works Department and dispose of the material in the trash if it is not hazardous

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What is the City doing?

The City's Stormwater Management Program includes the following to better service Portsmouth water customers and protect our environment:

- A completed a **Stormwater Master Plan**.
- A standalone **stormwater ordinance** to protect our waterways
- Site review and **zoning ordinance revisions** including low-impact development requirements.
- A **partnership with Soak Up the Rain New Hampshire (SOAK)**, a program managed by the NHDES with the goal of protecting and restoring clean water.
- Installation of **rain gardens** throughout the area, in which water filters through plants and soil layers before entering the groundwater system.
- **Tree box filter installations**, mini water quality filters installed beneath trees to control runoff while helping irrigate trees.
- **Increased green infrastructure improvements to City projects** with commitments to stormwater enhancements, aesthetics and regulations of the Clean Water Act.



Tree box filter



Rain garden, Portsmouth High School



Sagamore Ave. Reconstruction with Porous Pavement



Resources:

- www.cityofportsmouth.com
- www.soaknh.org
- Portsmouth Department of Public Works: (603) – 427 - 1530