



City of Bessemer

Storm Water Management Educational Series

Know Your Storm Water



Storm Water and Watersheds

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Storm Water Pollution Causes

How Can I Help?

How Can I Help?

Do pick up after your pet. Scoop it up, bag it and dispose in your regular garbage or flush the waste down the toilet.

Do pick up litter from your property. Also, consider adopting a storm drain to keep clean or participating in a cleanup event.

Do not blow grass clippings, leaves, weeds, etc. onto streets and gutters or into storm drain inlets and ditches.

Do not change oil or fluids on a driveway or paved area sloping to a street or near a storm drain inlet or a ditch – take it to a service station or use drip pans and drop off at a recycle center or approved disposal handler.

Do not allow pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers to drain onto streets and gutters or into storm drain inlets and ditches – use sparingly; away from the drains; not before expected rainfall; and prevent sprinkler water from causing their runoff into drains.



How Can I Help?

Do not wash vehicles or equipment on a driveway sloping to the street or near a storm drain inlet or ditch – take it to a car wash or wash the vehicle on a vegetated area.

Do not dispose leftover paint, cleaners, solvents or household hazardous wastes into storm drains - use completely or take it to a collection center.

Do not allow power wash water with chemicals/soaps/detergents to enter storm drains – collect and discharge to the sanitary sewer or over a vegetated area.

Do not dispose chlorinated or salt water from pools or spas into storm drains or ditches. Discharge to sanitary sewer.

REMEMBER, storm water is not treated – it goes straight to water bodies, which are where we swim & fish.

Bessemer City Hall

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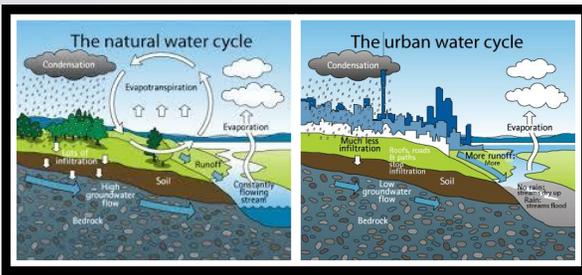


Storm Water and Watersheds

When it rains, water hits the ground or a surface and infiltrates into the ground or runs off the surface. In some cases, the water evaporates. Water that goes into the ground is typically known as groundwater. Water that runs off the ground or a surface is known as **storm water**.

Storm water runoff occurs when rain hits an impervious surface (roof, driveway, paved road, parking lot, concrete pad, clay etc.) Typically, storm water flows from a ridge line (highest point that separates two areas) to a collection point/area downstream. The area where rain falls and is collected is known as a **watershed**.

The general flow of ground water is westward, away from the higher elevations of the City, toward the Black Warrior River. Major creeks located in the area include Shades, Valley, Five Mile, Blue, Halls, and several unnamed tributaries. These creeks and tributaries contribute to the composition of several watersheds located within the city limits of Bessemer. The watersheds are: Five Mile-Valley Creek, Headwaters Valley Creek, Jordan Spring Branch-Valley Creek, Lick Creek-Valley Creek, Lower Shades Creek, Lower Valley Creek, and Upper Shades Creek. All seven watersheds comprise some portion of the 100-year floodplain.



Storm Water Pollution



Storm water runoff is the **#1 source of water pollution**.

Storm water runoff from impervious surfaces (roads, driveways, parking lot, roofs, etc.) is collected from streets and gutters into storm drain inlets, pipes ditches, channels, etc... is known as the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). In most cases, storm water collected by the MS4, flows **directly into our creeks, rivers, bays and oceans**.

Storm water collects, mixes and drains exposed material on the surface (litter trash, dirt, metals, oil, pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, paint, and other illicit discharges/improper disposals) and directly discharges to our creeks, rivers, and other water bodies.

Unlike sanitary sewer waste water (from sinks, showers, toilets, laundry, wash areas, etc...), **storm water is NOT treated** before entering our water bodies.

Storm water pollution could affect your watershed – **where you swim and fish**.

Storm Water Pollution Causes

Storm water pollution can be caused by several factors such as:

Litter/Trash

Cans, Paper, plastic, cups, trash, cigarette butts, bottles, etc...

Chemicals

Pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, oils, antifreeze, paint, etc...

Material

Leaves, grass clippings, sediment, pet waste, power wash, and vehicle wash effluent.

Storm water pollution is caused by simple day-to-day activities.

For example:

- Sweeping litter, leaves, trash, grass clippings, mulch, dirt, etc... into streets or into storm drains
- Washing equipment tools & vehicles on driveway, streets, or parking lots.
- Exposing stock-piles of waste, liquids, dirt, mulch, metals, and other runoff-type material to rain.
- Dumping paint, yard wastes, household chemicals, pet wastes, etc. into storm drains or ditches.