

Stormwater Management Tips for Homeowners

Borough of Etna

8/1/2017

Fall Newsletter

Protecting our Waterways

Etna is a combined sewer community. What that means is that sanitary sewage and storm water enter the same piping system. During heavy rains, the pipes carrying the combined flow reach capacity and *overflow*, which are built into the system, allow the excess to overflow to streams and rivers. With decades of

development, our local regional sewer systems overflow on a regular basis during heavy rain events. As we have just seen, some seasons can be very *wet*, causing frequent overflows. There are things that homeowners can do to help cut down these overflows.



Here are some of those tips!

Minimize stormwater runoff by mulching flower beds; build a rain garden; keep lawns thick and healthy; disconnect your downspout into a rain barrel; avoid dumping grass clippings into waterways and storm sewers; pickup dog waste; don't dump hazardous waste on the ground or down the drain;

don't blow leaves out into the street other than before leaf pickup; do not flush unwanted medications down the drain or toilet; do not pour used motor oil down the drain or into a catch basin; and by reducing the amount of fertilizers and lawn chemicals that you use.

What is Stormwater Runoff?



Rain or snowmelt that flows overland is stormwater runoff. This can infiltrate into the soil, discharge into a stream or other body of water, or catch basins or evaporate back into the atmosphere. As rain falls onto roof surfaces or road surfaces and lawns, it can pick up chemicals and other pollutants as it goes. These can either overflow from a combined sewer system in heavy rain or go directly into storm drains that drain directly into Pine Creek or the Allegheny River, carrying those chemicals and pollutants with them.

Poorly managed stormwater can cause other problems too, like localized flooding, stream bank erosion and restriction of recreational use of our waterways.

There are many other ways that you can aid with stormwater management right at your own home. Trees help infiltrate stormwater and increase evaporation and filter pollutants, so plant a native tree or a rain garden! Don't do laundry or run the dishwasher during rain events! Etna is at the bottom of a large watershed, the Pine Creek Watershed, so adding to the flow in the conveyance pipes during heavy rain events only adds to the

overloaded system caused by the stormwater. If thinking of replacing your driveway, consider a pervious surface. If you are thinking of disconnecting your downspout, contact Bob Snyder regarding a residential downspout disconnect permit, which can qualify you for an annual credit off of your sewer environmental service fee. Etna is a densely populated area, so disconnect is not for everyone and can cause

flooding problems with your neighbor's foundation, sidewalk or roadway icing, which is why Etna requires a permit for disconnection. If you have a proper, approved location, you can, with continued maintenance of your rain barrel, get a credit of \$30.00 per year for three years.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON STORMWATER MANAGEMENT VISIT www.etnaborough.org

You can also pick up a copy of the Southwestern Pennsylvania's *Homeowners Guide to Stormwater* in the lobby of the municipal building. Copies provided by the Allegheny County Conservation District.

