

Top Ten Things You Can Do to Protect Your Watershed



1. Water only when it's necessary.

Conserve water used inside the house as well.

2. Limit use of pesticides and fertilizers.



3. Plant hardy vegetation. Cover bare spots in your yard.

4. Put litter in its place.



5. Compost or mulch yard waste.

Don't leave it in the street or sweep it into storm drains!

6. Repair auto leaks.

Recycle used oil and antifreeze.



7. Wash your car at a commercial car wash or on the lawn.



8. Recycle and dispose of household chemicals properly.



9. Inspect and service septic system at least every 2 years.



10. Pick up after your pet!



For more information:

- contact your local city or county government
- contact your county Soil & Water Conservation District or Extension Service
- visit the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality's website at www.deq.state.ms.us or call 601-961-5171

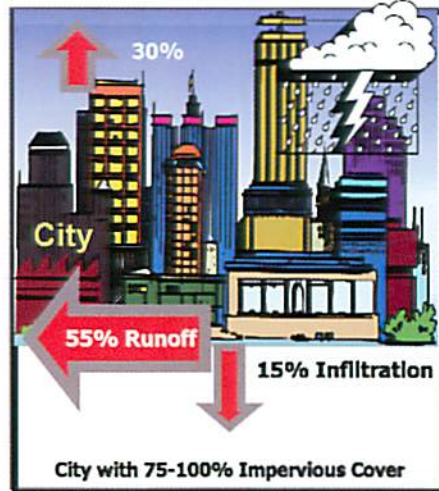
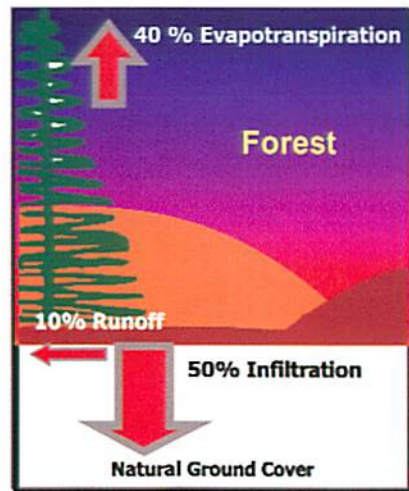


Protecting Water Quality from URBAN RUNOFF

Clean Water Is Everybody's Business!

In urban and suburban areas, much of the land surface is covered by buildings and pavement that do not allow rain to soak into the ground. Instead, most developed areas rely on storm drains to carry large amounts of runoff from roofs and paved areas to nearby waterways. The stormwater runoff picks up and carries oil, dirt, chemicals and lawn fertilizers directly to streams and rivers. This impacts water quality and destroys aquatic life.

Did you know that a city block generates over 5 times more runoff than a similar-sized woodland area?



Relationship Between Impervious Cover and Surface Runoff

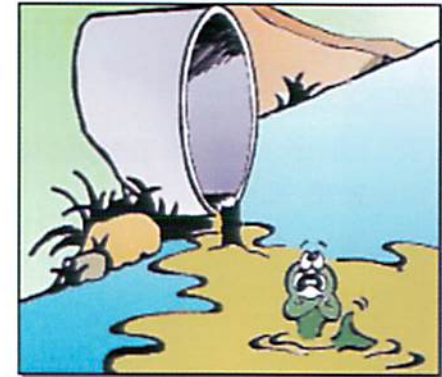
Impervious cover in a watershed results in increased surface runoff. As little as 10 percent impervious cover in a watershed can cause stream degradation.

How Urbanized Areas Affect Water Quality

Increased Runoff

Porous natural landscapes such as forests, wetlands, and grasslands detain rainwater and allow it to filter slowly into the ground. In contrast, impervious (nonporous) surfaces like roads, parking lots, and rooftops prevent rain from infiltrating (soaking) into the ground causing large amounts of rainfall to run off rapidly. Urbanization leads to increases in flooding since *more* water moves off hard surfaces *faster*.

Storm sewer systems concentrate runoff. The mass of water now flows so rapidly to the nearest stream that the force uproots vegetation and destroys aquatic habitat. This fast moving water also may carry along sediment from construction sites and other bare areas.



Increased Pollutant Loads

Urbanization also increases the variety and amount of pollutants carried into streams, rivers, and lakes. The pollutants include:

- Sediment (dirt)
- Oil, grease and toxic chemicals from motor vehicles
- Pesticides and nutrients from lawns and gardens
- Viruses, bacteria, and nutrients from pet waste and failing septic systems
- Heavy metals from roof shingles and other sources
- Increased temperature of runoff from dark streets, rooftops, and parking lots.

These pollutants can harm fish and wildlife populations, kill native vegetation, foul drinking water supplies, and make recreational areas unsafe and unpleasant.

Citizens should make every effort to keep pollutants from entering storm drains and streams. Do your part!