

Stormwater Runoff: Serving up a Poisonous Cocktail



Keep Soil Healthy

Use compost and organic fertilizers to enhance garden soils. Also limit the use of herbicides and pesticides as these can end up in the river after the next rainstorm.



Keep our Waters Clean

This stormdrain was painted with the message "Don't Dump" to remind people not to dump substances down the stormdrain. Whatever we put into stormdrains winds up in the rivers where we fish, swim, and boat.

What you can do:

- If you change your vehicle's motor oil, use a drip pan. Recycle all used oil and antifreeze at a local service station.
- Try growing your lawn without pesticides and fertilizers. Fertilizers in stormwater runoff promote rapid growth of aquatic plants, which, when they die and decay, rob oxygen from fish and other aquatic animals. If fertilizing, try using compost to enhance your soil.
- The Lake Champlain Committee is working to raise awareness of water quality issues. To get involved, contact them at www.lakechamplaincommittee.org.



All photographs courtesy Joel Flewelling.

There's nothing so refreshing as a summer rainstorm—unless you happen to be an aquatic plant or animal. When rain pounds on parking lots, farm fields, golf courses, roads, and rooftops, it may carry off the ingredients for a toxic brew. Animal waste, fertilizers, pesticides, soil, heavy metals, garbage, and

motor oil join the stormwater runoff and flow into nearby streams, wetlands, and lakes. Here, siltation and toxins can damage fish and amphibian habitat, pollute drinking water, and foul beaches. Stormwater runoff is one of our state's leading contributors to water pollution.