



# THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

## Environmental Health and Safety Office

### OU STORM WATER NEWSLETTER

Volume II

Fall 2007

#### Welcome Back!

The Environmental Health & Safety Office (EHSO) would like to thank all faculty, staff, and students that have helped to reduce the amount of pollution entering storm water runoff. In this issue of the OU Storm Water Newsletter, the following questions will be answered:

- What is the OU Storm Water Management Plan?
- Why is the OU Storm Water Management Plan important to me?
- How is storm water polluted?
- What can you do to help prevent storm water pollution?



#### What is the OU Storm Water Management Plan?

In the last edition of the OU Storm Water newsletter, the EHSO introduced the OU Storm Water Management Plan (OUSWMP) which was created in July of 2005. The OUSWMP serves as a guide that identifies potential problem areas on the OU campus and outlines work practices that can be followed so that storm water runoff is protected from pollution. These work practices are referred to as best management practices (BMPs). BMPs are designed to mitigate the possibility of pollution entering the storm water discharge system. BMPs may include administratively modifying work practices or utilizing procedural requirements to mitigate the possibility of storm water runoff pollution.

#### Why is OU Storm Water Management Plan Important to Me?

The OUSWMP is designed to prevent pollution from entering into waterways and improve overall water quality. The importance of protecting storm water is to ensure that bodies of water receiving storm water will remain free of pollution while allowing fish populations to remain healthy, recreational waters to stay clean, drinking water to be free of contaminants, and to keep OU in compliance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards.

#### How is Storm Water Polluted?

Pollution in storm water is the result of contaminants entering storm water runoff. These contaminants can include, but are not limited to, oils, yard clippings, chemicals, and soap. Storm water pollution can occur from a large variety of sources located throughout campus. Below are some examples of how storm water pollution can occur, and ways to prevent pollution.



#### **Motor Oil, Oil Filters, Detergents, Antifreeze & Transmission Fluid**

- Washing cars and degreasing auto parts can send detergents and other contaminants through the storm sewer system. Dumping automotive fluids into storm drains has the same result as dumping the materials directly into a body of water. Repair auto leaks and dispose of used auto fluids at automotive repair shops. Contain and clean up spills immediately.

#### **Pesticides and Fertilizers, Yard Waste and Excessive Dirt**

- Excess fertilizers and pesticides applied to lawns and gardens wash off and pollute streams. Pesticides and fertilizers should be used sparingly, while organic mulch or safer pest control methods should be used whenever possible. Don't over-water lawns and consider using a soaker hose instead of a sprinkler.
- Lawn clippings and leaves can wash into storm drains and contribute nutrients and organic matter to streams. Sweep up yard debris rather than hosing down areas. When possible, compost or recycle yard waste by taking it to the Norman Compost facility. Cover up piles of dirt or mulch being used in landscaping projects.

## Paint and Solvents

- Clean paint brushes in a sink, not outdoors. Properly dispose of excess paints through a hazardous waste collection program. Hazardous waste disposal for University processes must be coordinated through the Environmental Health and Safety Office. The City of Norman has annual Household Hazardous Waste Days where citizens can take household hazardous wastes for disposal.

## Pet Waste

- Pet waste can be a major source of bacteria and excess nutrients in local waters. When walking pets, remember to pick up the waste and dispose of it properly. Flushing pet waste is the best disposal method. Leaving pet waste on the ground increases public health risks by allowing harmful bacteria and nutrients to wash into the storm drain and eventually into local water bodies.

## Trash

- Make sure all outside trash receptacles are covered and anchored properly. **DO NOT LITTER!** Trash can pollute ground and surface water. Rainwater washes over trash and percolates into groundwater. Report illegal dumping to the proper authorities (on-campus concerns - call 325-5147, City of Norman concerns - call 366-5396, for statewide concerns - contact the Oklahoma DEQ Environmental Complaint line at 1-800-522-0206).

## What Can You Do to Help Prevent Storm Water Pollution?

Listed below are ten ways all members of the OU community can help prevent storm water pollution both at OU and at home.

1. Do not litter.
2. For those of us who are pet lovers, make sure all pet waste is properly disposed of into a closed trash can.
3. When performing yard work, be sure to properly dispose of all yard clippings into closed trashcans which will prevent clipped grass and other debris from entering the storm drains.
4. Dispose of excess pesticides and fertilizers properly.
5. When using paints and solvents, make sure they are properly disposed and not poured down storm drains.
6. Be sure not to over-use pesticides and fertilizers on your yard.
7. When performing any automotive maintenance, be sure to perform in a proper location such as an auto garage so that oil and other petroleum products are not accidentally spilled where they can enter the storm water drains.
8. Wash your automobile in designated car wash areas away from storm drains.
9. Perform regular automotive maintenance to be sure that your car is not leaking any fluids that may be able to drain into the storm drains.
10. Make sure trash is properly stored in closed trash cans and is taken out weekly so that excess trash and debris will not have the potential to be spilled into our storm drains.



## Resources

For more information check out the links below.

### State & Local Government:

City of Norman Pollution Prevention Website:  
[http://www.ci.norman.ok.us/tips/pollution\\_prevention.htm](http://www.ci.norman.ok.us/tips/pollution_prevention.htm)  
City of Oklahoma City: Stormwater Quality Management  
<http://www.okc.gov/pw/SWQ/storm.html>  
Environmental Protection Agency: Polluted Runoff  
<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/dosdont.html>  
Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality:  
<http://www.deq.state.ok.us/WQDnew/stormwater/index.html>

### Fun For Kids:

<http://www.stormwatercoalition.org/>  
<http://www.oceansidecleanwaterprogram.org/kids.asp>  
<http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/NPS/kids/>  
<http://www.cleanwaterclearchoice.org/kids/>

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