

Appendix C - What Can You Do To Prevent Water Pollution?

“A man who is willing to undertake the discipline and difficulty of mending his own ways is worth more to the conservation movement than a hundred who are insisting merely that the government and the industries mend their ways.”

- Wendell Berry

At Home

- Properly dispose of household chemicals such as paint and cleaners at the local hazardous waste center (do NOT pour down sink or storm drains! Visit, the Association of Indiana Solid Waste Management Districts for more information at www.aiswmd.org/). Buy environmentally-friendly products: many safe yet effective cleaning solutions can be made from organic or non-toxic ingredients.
- Reduce the amount of solid waste you generate. Landfill space is becoming scarcer daily.
- Make sure your septic system is properly functioning www.state.in.us/isdh/23283.htm.
- Wash your car at a car wash or in your lawn. Do not wash it in your driveway with dirt and detergents flowing down a storm drain and into a local waterway.

Water Conservation

- Repair leaky faucets and toilets right away.
- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth and washing the dishes.
- Run the washing machine and dishwasher only when they are fully loaded.
- Sweep off instead of hosing the driveway, patio or sidewalk.
- Install water-saving shower heads and high-performance, low-flush toilets.
- Water your lawn and garden only in the morning or evening.

In the Yard/Garden/Field

- Discontinue or minimize fertilizer usage on lawns, crops, etc., or use organic fertilizers.
- Test your soil to determine its nutrient needs before treating.
- Consider Integrated Pest Management principles (ask your Purdue Extension Educator, <https://extension.purdue.edu/about#counties>).
- Use the smallest amount of an appropriate pesticide at the proper time.
- Encourage natural pest predators such as certain birds and harmless insects.

On the Road/On the Water

- Fix motor vehicle leaks to prevent oil, antifreeze and other fluids from dripping onto streets, driveways and parking lots. These chemicals will mix with rain to produce polluted runoff.
- Recycle used motor oil and antifreeze.
- Boats and engines should be properly cleaned or allowed to dry after leaving zebra mussel infested waters.
- Check boat trailer for any “weeds” or fragments of invasive aquatic plants.

Wetlands

Wetlands filter pollutants such as sediment and nutrient runoff. Wetlands hold water and reduce flooding. Healthy functioning wetlands can actually reduce mosquito populations.

- Protect and preserve existing wetlands.
- Restore and create wetlands for landscaping and wildlife habitat.
- Be an advocate for wetlands and educate others about their importance.

Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Agricultural, urban/residential, and construction BMPs are systems or activities that are practiced to control and prevent erosion and nonpoint source pollution. They generally involve various combinations of the following approaches:

- Minimize mixing of rain and pollutants (e.g., animal waste management, fertilizer and pesticide/herbicide management, integrated pest management).
- Restrict water runoff, thereby restricting transportation of pollutants through the use of:
 - Porous pavement,
 - Ground cover management,
 - Conservation tillage (any tillage and planting system that covers 30% or more of the soil surface with crop residue after planting); and,
 - No-till (leaves the soil undisturbed from harvest to planting except for nutrient injection: Planting or drilling is accomplished in a narrow seedbed or slot created by special equipment. Weed control is accomplished primarily with herbicides).
- Trap/collect pollutants to prevent them from entering waterbodies or groundwater through the use of:
 - Silt fences,
 - Detention sedimentation basins,
 - Riparian buffer strips (streamside plantings of trees, shrubs, and grasses) and,
 - Grassed waterways (strips of grass seeded in areas of cropland where water concentrates and flows off a field).

Advocacy

Advocacy is the act of pleading for, supporting or recommending a cause or course of action. Becoming an advocate may require seeking out information about what laws exist and who is instrumental in deciding or enforcing those laws. Be sure you are well informed before pursuing a course of action. Get involved!

- To influence new or existing regulations, attend public comment meetings and participate in discussion (avoid opinionated comments, make articulate ones), write well-written letters, and/or arrange face-to-face meetings with rule makers (i.e. legislators, city/county council members, zoning board members).
- Participate in your neighborhood organization, watershed organization, land trust, local or state-wide river/stream/lake/wetland protection organization (or START one) (see <http://www.idem.IN.gov/nps/pages/finder/>).
- Participate in storm drain stenciling programs (or START one!).
- Arrange and/or sponsor public presentations by respected experts.
- Serve on a decision-making board or run for office.