

Storm Drains Aren't Garbage Cans: It ALL Drains to the River

Most of us don't think much about the storm drains at the end of our driveways or on our streets. Likewise, there probably isn't much thought given to roadside ditches. They're just there. But, storm drains and roadside ditches play a key role in the quality of our region's lakes and rivers.

How? Anything that gets in a storm drain or a roadside ditch goes directly to rivers and lakes without being treated. If anything other than rain — excess fertilizer, pet waste, yard waste, motor oil, deicing salt, or other chemicals, for example — gets in drains or ditches, our rivers and lakes will become polluted. A build-up of any of these pollutants in lakes and rivers can be the cause of beach closings and can impact our ability to enjoy time on the water. As a result, the overall quality of life in Southeast Michigan is negatively impacted.

- **Sweep it.** Do you have extra fertilizer, grass clippings, leaves, deicing salt, or dirt on your driveway? Sweep it back onto your lawn.
- **Keep it clean.** Whether in the street or in your yard, remember to keep leaves, grass clippings, trash, fertilizers, and deicing salts away from storm drains.
- **Only rain in the drain.** Never dump motor oil, chemicals, pet waste, dirty soapy water, or anything else down the storm drain. Once down the storm drain, all of these materials pollute our lakes and streams.
- **Label it.** Volunteer to label storm drains in your neighborhood to inform your neighbors that they flow directly to our lakes and streams. Encourage friends and family members to contact their local community for more information on storm drain stenciling programs.

For additional information, contact: Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) at: (313) 961-4266 or visit their website at www.semco.org.