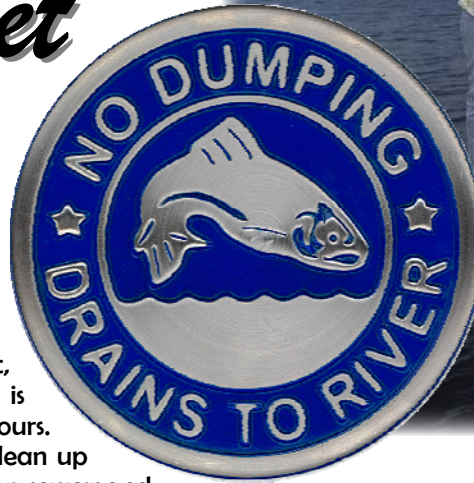


# Separate Storm Sewers Fact Sheet

## WATER POLLUTION

Sources of water pollution like industrial wastes from factories have been greatly reduced in recent years. Now, more than 60% of water pollution comes from things like leaking oil from cars, excess fertilizer, and pet waste. All these sources add up to a big pollution problem. So, believe it or not, the biggest source of water pollution today is not industry – it is actually households like yours. But each of us can do small things to help clean up our water. And it starts with realizing that *our sewers and storm systems are separate – what goes into storm drains flows directly into the environment, untreated.*



## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH DUMPING STUFF DOWN STORM DRAINS?

Doesn't it all get treated anyway? NO! The storm system and wastewater systems are separate. What goes down the toilet goes to the wastewater treatment plant, where the water is processed and cleaned before being released back into our waterways. What goes down storm drains flows directly into our environment. Storm water pollution is any harmful substance that enters into the storm water sewer system. As storm water flows (or snow melts), it picks up debris, chemicals (like fertilizers and pesticides), dirt, cigarette butts, and other pollutants. These pollutants enter the storm sewer system and are discharged into a lake, stream, river, or wetland. Because of this pollution, our local waterways are now impaired and aquatic life is suffering. And this is mainly due to our own negligence and carelessness with common pollutants. So the moral of the story is this: *If it's on the ground, it's in your water.*

## FACTS AND FIGURES

- Today, nonpoint source (NPS) pollution remains the nation's largest source of water quality problems. Nonpoint source pollution is generated by all of us, a product of millions of actions that we take each day, including activities such as applying pesticides, fertilizing our lawns, or the manner in which we dispose of oil.
- A detailed study by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management found that 36% of Indiana's rivers and streams are not clean enough to fully support all aquatic life.
- The same study found that over 40% of Indiana's rivers and streams are unsafe even for swimming and boating. In over 3,500 stream miles, the amount of *E. Coli* bacteria signified unsafe recreation levels.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

How can you help keep our waters clean?

- Don't dump anything into storm drains. This is a violation! Storm drains lead directly into our area waterways.
- Report a Polluter: If you see someone dumping illegally into storm drains or water bodies, report it right away. Call 219-365-6465 or go to [www.stjohnin.com](http://www.stjohnin.com).
- Volunteer to help mark the storm drains in your neighborhood. These markers (like the one shown above) help deter people from dumping pollutants down the drain. We will provide you with the decals and tools. Contact us at the number below if you are interested in helping. Our goal is to get every storm drain in the city of Carmel marked. We need your help.

