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CLEVELAND STORMWATER CAMPAIGN BEGINS
Only Rain Down the Storm Drain

CLEVELAND, OHIO, July 2011— Clean water is important to public health. Understanding how personal actions can impact water quality is the first step toward reducing water pollution in and around the City of Cleveland.

The Cleveland Division of Water Pollution Control (WPC) has commenced the *Only Rain Down the Storm Drain* campaign, an educational effort focused on informing City of Cleveland residents about stormwater runoff and how it affects water quality. Stormwater runoff is rainfall or snowmelt.

Through the use of street kiosk posters, literature, billboards, television programming, social media and other promotional methods, the multi-layered campaign also will teach citizens how their actions can make a positive environmental difference.

“Clean water benefits plants, wildlife and all the people who live, work and play in the City of Cleveland,” said Rachid Zoghaib, WPC Interim Commissioner. “Exposure to the Only Rain Down the Storm Drain campaign will show people how proper use and protection of storm drains can protect their property and their health as well as our local waterways.”

Anything—trash, leaves, grass, fertilizers, pet waste, anti-freeze and other chemicals—that is dumped into a sewer catch basin or is on the ground can be carried by stormwater runoff or water from lawn sprinklers into local waterways and eventually into Lake Erie, which is Northeast Ohio’s main source of drinking water.

While wastewater from homes goes directly to a treatment plant, runoff water entering storm drains in separate sewer areas flows untreated into the Cuyahoga River, Lake Erie or other nearby streams. Contaminants carried by stormwater runoff can harm aquatic life, animals around waterways, create hazardous swimming conditions and other human health risks as well as compromise drinking water. Just by slowing stormwater runoff, the amount of water pollution can be greatly reduced.

Pollutants are only part of the stormwater problem. Another issue is the volume and force that stormwater can generate, causing street and basement flooding.

Residents also are being encouraged by the campaign to report illegal dumping in catch basins to (216) 664-DUMP. It is illegal to pour grease or other substances into the sewer or catch basins. Violators can be fined up to \$500 for each occurrence that causes damage to the City's sewer system.

Below are some basic things residents can do to protect local waterways:

- Clean up after your pet! Dispose of pet waste in a toilet, so it may be properly treated. Leaving pet waste on the ground increases the risk of harmful bacteria and nutrients washing into the nearest storm drain.
- Maintain your car so that it will not leak fluids. These pollutants move with rainwater or snowmelt to the nearest storm drain.
- Leaves and grass clippings should never be raked or dumped into storm drains. They decay in the water, which reduces the oxygen available to fish and wildlife when the water enters the nearest river or stream. Use lawn and leaf bags to collect yard waste.
- Immediately seed, sod or mulch after completing a construction project to prevent runoff. Not only can sediment negatively affect the waterways, it also can affect your wallet by causing flood damage and reduced property values.

We can all do our part to leave a legacy of clean water for future generations.

For more information about the Only Rain Down the Storm Drain campaign, please visit the WPC website at www.clevelandwpc.com.

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