

# Stormwater ABC's

Stormwater pollution happens because dirty water contaminated with stuff like trash, cigarette butts and dog poop, goes from the street into our creeks and rivers. This dirty water flows through storm drains, so it's called stormwater pollution. See if you know some of these important stormwater words.



**Catch Basins** are the openings in the gutter at the corner of the street. They catch water as it runs down the gutter, so they're called catch basins. Once something is swept, blown or washed into a catch basin, it goes directly to the Minnesota River. That's why catch basins are for water only. Not trash.



**Runoff** When it rains, or when people use their sprinklers on their lawn or a hose to wash their car, the water runs down the gutter and into the catch basins. This runoff mixes with garbage, motor oil and other nasty stuff in the street and flows out to the Minnesota River.



**Storm Drains** are the concrete openings or metal pipes you can see, that have water flowing from them into the Minnesota River. If you see a large pool of water near a storm drain, stay away. It is polluted and could make you sick. Never play in the water flowing from a storm drain, or go in the river directly in front of a storm drain.



**Contamination** means something has polluted the water and made it unhealthy for recreation and aquatic life.



**Watershed** is not a building. It's a place. We all live in a watershed, a large area, even bigger than a city, where water drains through the streets, river beds and mountains down to the river. Understanding how watersheds work helps us understand how to keep our rivers, lakes and the ocean clean.