

Stormwater Information

Thursday, 31 December 2009

Understanding Stormwater

Every gutter in your neighborhood drains through an inlet then into the storm sewer system that then drains to streams, ditches, lakes, and ponds in your neighborhood. These water bodies are drinking water supplies, recreational areas and the homes of wildlife.

The five items that impact water quality are total suspended solids, flow volume, nutrients, fertilizers and pesticides.

- Total Suspended Solids - TSS includes all solids present in a water sample including metals, minerals and dirt.
- Flow volume - Increased volume erodes a waterway's habitat.
- Nutrients - The term "nutrients" encompasses many elements found to be essential to our environment. When looking at water quality, there are two main nutrients that in large quantities are pollutants. These two nutrients are nitrogen and phosphorus. Nitrogen and phosphorus increase the growth of algae in waterways decreasing the amount of oxygen in the water for the natural habitats. These two nutrients may also release ammonia-ammonia is toxic to fish and other aquatic life. Not only does pet waste contain bacteria, viruses, and parasites, decaying pet waste in a stream reduces the amount of oxygen available to natural habitats in waterways and may release ammonia, toxic to fish and other aquatic life.
- Fertilizers - Fertilizers often contain nitrogen and phosphorus (the nutrients most often found to be pollutants to surface water bodies).
- Pesticides - Pesticides that enter surface waterbodies ultimately impact natural by eliminating insects that are essential to an effective ecosystem.

Simple things you can do to help increase the quality of water:

- Wash your car at a commercial car wash.
- Take a plastic bag with you when you walk your pet.
- Decrease the amount of bare area in your yard by planting native

plants.

- Store your household chemicals correctly in your garage (i.e. store products in their original containers).
- Keep your vehicle well maintained to stop leaks before they happen.
- Use kitty litter, sawdust, or dirt to soak up a spill and put it in the trash. DO NOT wash the spill to the gutter.
- Raise your lawn mower's blade to the highest level to provide shade to your grasses roots and lower the amount of water required by your grass.
- Use alternatives to pesticides and fertilizers.
- Properly dispose of your household hazardous waste by participating in the Tri County Health Department annual Household Chemical Roundup. For more information, go to <http://www.tchd.org/householdchemical.htm>
- After household painting projects, wash brushes and equipment in your sink or shower-do not wash to the gutter.

For information on how to protect our drinking water supplies, please visit:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Source Water Protection Program

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Public Education on Stormwater Impacts

State of Colorado Non-point Source Pollution Program

Report an illegal dumping or discharge to the storm sewer

To report an illegal dumping or discharge to the storm sewer, please contact Tony Lell, Building Official at 303-412-3534. If you prefer, clicking Tony's name will take you to a form where you can send him an e-mail.

In Federal Heights, nothing can enter the stormsewer system (gutters and surface water bodies) except for non-chlorinated water and weather related run-off. The City owns all of the stormsewer conveyance system outside of mobile home parks and is responsible for anything that enters it. As a result, the following sections of the Federal Heights Municipal Code restricts discharges and dumping and any one of these Code sections can be cited in order to cease such activity:

Federal Heights Municipal Code Article VI, Chapter 162 (Stormwater Soil Erosion and Sediment Control) allows the City to cite all stormwater and construction site erosion violations.

Federal Heights Municipal Code Article VII, Chapter 30 (Depositing Debris in Stream Waters) allows the City to cite for pollution of stream waters.

Stormwater Utility Fee

As a result of federal Clean Water Act restrictions, the City of Federal Heights has created a stormwater utility fee to cover costs associated with compliance with Clean Water Act requirements. This fee is assigned to all utility bills at a rate based upon lot size and impermeable area of a lot.

For information on how to protect our drinking water supplies, please visit:

U.S.
Environmental Protection Agency Source Water Protection Program

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Public Education on
Stormwater Impacts

State of
Colorado Non-point Source Pollution Program

While businesses may have permission to discharge from the State of Colorado to State waters, no business has permission to discharge to the stormsewer conveyance system without prior approval through the city.

If you witness an illegal dumping and it is currently taking place, please call 911. If you have questions about permission to discharge, please contact the the City's Building Division at 303-412-3534. All requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Construction Links

State
construction permit

Stormwater
Pollution Prevention Plan preparation guidance document

Urban
Drainage Volume 3 - Best Management Practices (BMP) manual

EPA - BMP Database