

Stormwater...

Why should we care?

Greenscapes™ are beautiful landscapes that protect our water.



Stormwater might as well be called HYDROFILTH. Here's why...

- Pathogens, heavy metals, pesticides, salts, oil, common litter end up in our water.
- The "first flush" - the first inch - of rainfall washes 90% of the pollutants off the land into our waterbodies.
- Parking lots, roads, buildings (impervious surfaces) keep water from soaking into the soil and drastically affect water quality - 12-20% impervious surface coverage can threaten water quality.
- Lawns can generate up to 90% as much runoff as pavement when soils are compacted by lawn equipment or lawn chemicals which can deplete the microbial activity in the soil.

So how can I help prevent stormwater runoff (HYDROFILTH)?

In your yard:

- Add compost to your soil and aerate to reduce soil compaction.
- Add trees, shrubs and 'natural' areas to your property - the roots are efficient water recyclers.
- Plant a rain garden to capture water so it soaks into the soil.
- Use permeable pavers and porous asphalt to build walks and driveways.

Visit greenscapes.org to learn more...



In your town:

- Support open space protection especially near waterbodies.
- Advocate zoning/building regulations that encourage less pavement and other impervious surfaces.
- Support your town's efforts to clean storm drains, sweep the streets and build an effective stormwater infrastructure.



Stormwater is the #1 source of water pollution in Massachusetts - Reducing impervious surfaces is the best solution!

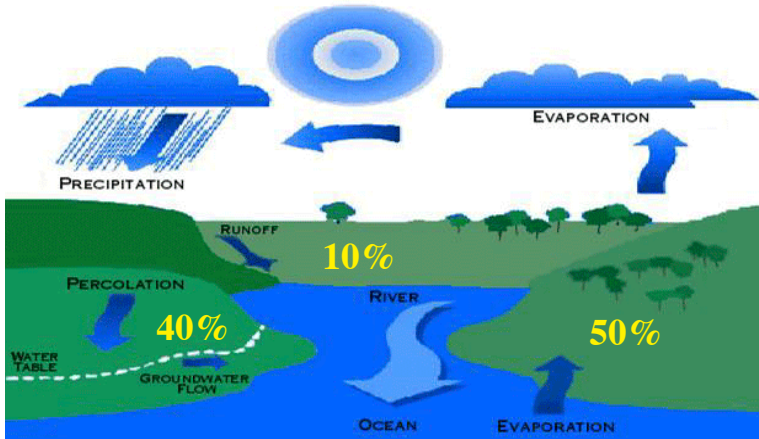
storm water: noun

Def: Rain and snow, not absorbed by plants and soil, that travels across land to the nearest waterbody

Question: It has always rained. Why do I keep hearing stormwater is such a problem now?

Answer: As we build more to accommodate a growing population and cover the soil with impervious surfaces (parking lots, roads, buildings, etc.) a great deal of rain water can no longer be absorbed into the soil the way it once was. Water that used to soak into the soil was actually cleansed by plant roots filtering pollutants. Now most of the rain and snow runs off, ending up in our lakes, streams and ocean. In short, we have been dramatically altering the water cycle as we change the landscape. *Where once only 10% of the rain ran off the land, now 60-90% does - carrying toxic pollutants on the land with it!*

NATURAL WATER CYCLE



MAN-MADE WATER CYCLE

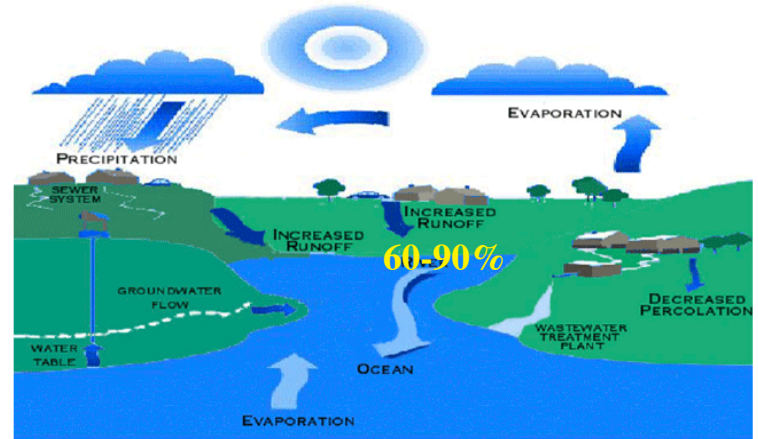


Image provided by Charles River Watershed Association

Question: Is stormwater runoff harmful?

Answer: Yes! Just about anything that has been deposited on the land, such as pet waste, cigarette butts, fertilizers, pesticides, plastic, automobile oil and gas can wash into our drinking water supply, favorite swimming hole or beach. The reason beaches have to close so often after a big rain storm is that stormwater runoff is often full of bacteria.

Question: Doesn't stormwater go to the sewage treatment plant via street storm drains and get treatment there?

Answer: No. Water goes to the nearest waterbody. Storm drains can offer some degree of treatment, but they are often not maintained or cleaned properly.



www.Greenskapes.org

This information is brought to you by the Massachusetts Greenscapes™ Coalition and your town