

Stormwater Quality in Cherry Hills Village

What is Stormwater?



Stormwater is water from rain or snow that doesn't soak into the ground. Impervious surfaces such as driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent stormwater runoff from naturally soaking into the ground. Large amounts of stormwater rushing off impervious surfaces can also flood yards, streets and basements.

As stormwater runoff flows from rooftops over paved areas, bare soil, and through sloped lawns, it picks up a variety of materials including soil sediment, animal waste, salt, pesticides, fertilizers, oil and grease, debris and other potential pollutants. Polluted stormwater runoff finds its way in a network of pipes or channels (our storm sewer system) to lakes, streams, rivers, or other waterways that flow through Cherry Hills Village. This **untreated** water is discharged directly into the waterbodies we use for swimming, fishing and providing drinking water.

Why should I care about stormwater?

Stormwater falls in every backyard, every street, every neighborhood, every city, and in every state. In addition, contaminated or polluted stormwater originating from these areas can lead to significant water quality problems. There are countless potential sources of pollution along the path stormwater travels before it reaches our waterbodies:

Sediment from bare soil areas (such as a construction site) can cloud the water and make it difficult or impossible for aquatic plants to grow. Sediment also can destroy aquatic habitats or clog waterbodies from the bottom up. Sediment removal costs local, state and federal governments millions of dollars every year.

Excess nutrients can cause algae blooms. A common source of excess nutrients in urban areas is from pet and animal waste. When algae die, they sink to the bottom and decompose in a process that removes oxygen from the water. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't exist in water with low dissolved oxygen levels.

Bacteria and other pathogens can wash into waterbodies and create health hazards.

Debris – plastic bags, six-pack rings, bottles, and cigarette butts – washed into waterbodies can choke, suffocate or disable aquatic life such as ducks, fish, turtles, and birds.

Household hazardous wastes – insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil, and other auto fluids – can poison aquatic life. Land animals and people can become sick from eating diseased fish and shellfish or ingesting polluted water.

Polluted stormwater often affects drinking water sources. This, in turn, can affect human health and increase drinking water-treatment costs.

According to an inventory conducted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), half of the impaired waterways in the United States are affected by stormwater runoff from urban/suburban and construction sources. As a result, stormwater management has become a national priority in the effort to further reduce water pollution.

What is Stormwater Phase II?

Improving the quality of our nation's waterways has been a top priority since the passage of the Clean Water Act. In 1990, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed Phase I of the Stormwater Program to continue the success of the Clean Water Act (www.epa.gov/npdes).

Phase I focused on the reduction of stormwater pollution from sources of stormwater runoff that had the greatest potential to negatively impact water quality, mainly from large construction sites, and from *medium and large* communities with a population of more than 100,000. Due to the success of Phase I, in 2003 the EPA enacted Phase II of the Stormwater Program to address polluted stormwater discharges from small construction sites (one to five acres), and from *small* municipalities (populations fewer than 100,000).

Splashing Home

Like all other small municipalities in the country, the City of Cherry Hills Village was mandated by the EPA to implement and fully comply with the new Phase II requirements by March 2008. Our City, and other Colorado Phase II municipalities work directly with the State Department of Public Health and Environment (www.cdphe.state.co.us) on the program requirements.

Phase II requires our City to develop and fully implement a complete stormwater management program by 2008. Stormwater management programs must contain appropriate management practices in each of the following Minimum Control Measure categories:

- I. Public Education and Outreach –**
Inform citizens about impacts of polluted stormwater runoff and steps to reduce stormwater pollution.
- II. Public Involvement and Participation –**
Provide opportunities for citizen involvement in program development and implementation.
- III. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination –**
Develop and implement a plan to detect and eliminate illicit discharges to storm sewers.

- IV. Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control –**
Develop, implement and enforce an erosion and sediment control program for activities that disturb one acre or more.

- V. Post-Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control –**
Manage discharges of post-construction stormwater runoff from new development and redevelopment areas.

- VI. Pollution Prevention / Good Housekeeping –**
Prevent or reduce pollutant runoff from municipal operations (e.g. street sweeping, erosion control, catch basin cleaning).

What's Being Done?

Across the nation, attention is shifting to non-point sources of pollution such as stormwater runoff. Stormwater management, especially in urban areas, is becoming a necessary step in the process of further reducing water pollution despite the inherent challenges it brings. The City of Cherry Hills Village is in the midst of complying with the EPA's Stormwater Phase II requirements. Please keep an eye out for updated information on the City Web site (www.cherryhillsvillage.com).

Of course, if you observe obvious illegal dumping, sources of pollution, or even have any questions regarding our upcoming programs, please call the City Public Works Department at 303-783-2731. Additional information will be provided through the Village Crier and the web page as the program areas are implemented and updated.