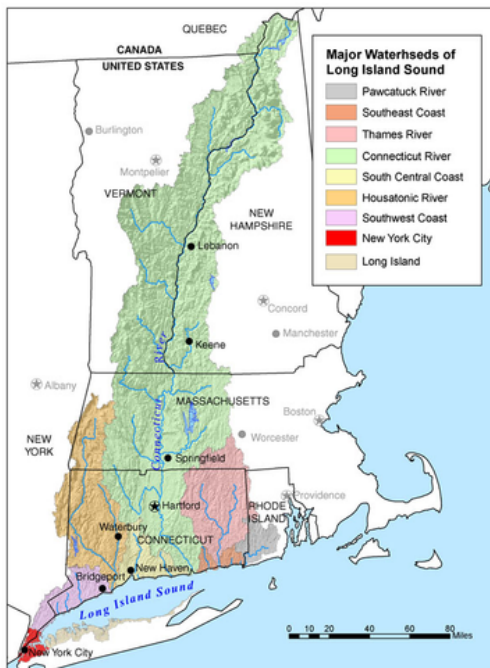


Think GREEN, Stay BLUE: Clean Water Starts with YOU!



GOOD news!

Industrial discharges are largely under control thanks to the Clean Water Act passed in 1972. With passage of this act, we saw the number of healthy rivers across the nation (those considered clean enough for fishing and swimming) increase from just 20% in the mid-1900's to 57% by 1994. The bad news is that just ten years later we saw that number drop slightly to 53% and by 2012, only 48% of rivers and streams were considered clean enough for fishing and swimming.

THE HEALTH OF CT'S WATER DEPENDS ON YOU!

No matter where we live, work, or play, we are somehow connected to a nearby river, stream, lake, pond, wetland, or shoreline. The rain that falls around us will always move according to gravity, following a path to the nearest downhill body of water and, in Connecticut, eventually to Long Island Sound. This simple fact means that the health of Long Island Sound -- and every river and stream that flows into it -- is connected to how we live on the land. Yet, many people still think that water pollution is caused mostly by discharges from business and industry and are unaware of the unique role we play in determining the fate of our waterways.

WHAT IS CAUSING A DECLINE IN RIVER HEALTH?

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, it is polluted runoff. Runoff is the water that does not soak into the ground during a storm. Forests and meadows are excellent places for water to soak into the ground, but with a growing population these areas are giving way to more developed land (i.e. more buildings, roads, parking lots, lawns) and the volume of runoff is increasing. So is the amount of polluted runoff -- water that picks up nutrients, salts, sediments, bacteria, pesticides, and other widely-used chemicals (like cleaning supplies and automotive fluids) from the landscape and carries them to nearby waterways. With fewer natural areas for water to soak into the ground and more pollutants being used in excess, nature's cleaning systems are overloaded, causing more pollutants to end up in our waterways.

Resources!

Visit www.riversmartct.org to find resources to get started with River Smart practices, and to learn more about how polluted runoff affects the health of our local rivers. The River Smart program will introduce you to and provide you with the tools you need to create areas to naturally absorb and filter runoff, to reduce chemical use, and to conserve water.

The future health of our water is in our hands. Working collectively, we CAN reduce water pollution and restore the health of our rivers, streams, lakes, and the Long Island Sound. Show your commitment to clean water and make the River Smart Pledge today. Pledge participants will receive a River Smart yard sign, a pledge reminder magnet, and a resource packet (while supplies last).



River Smart steps YOU can take!

nurture native trees, shrubs, and flowers

Native species require no fertilizers or pesticides or watering to keep healthy. They thrive in the local habitat and provide great food and shelter birds, pollinators, and other wildlife.

Limit paved areas by creating natural spaces

Rain gardens and swales are excellent ways to attenuate and treat runoff from roofs and driveways. Pervious material like gravel, porous concrete, and field stone can be used for patios, driveways, and walkways

DISPOSE OF PET WASTE IN THE TRASH

It is full of bacteria that can make our waterways unsafe for drinking, swimming and fishing.

Reduce or eliminate use of FERTILIZERS & PESTICIDES

These chemicals washed from your property with every rainstorm into a nearby waterway where they can cause algal blooms and be deadly to aquatic organisms. Before applying chemicals, get your soil tested to determine what you actually need and if necessary, use only a slow-release, low-concentration fertilizer or natural compost. If applying pesticides, spot treat only when absolutely necessary and carefully follow the safety guidelines provided.

CHECK AND FIX ALL TAPS AND HOSES FOR LEAKS AND DRIPS

Upgrade to more water-efficient appliances and fixtures, like those with the "WaterSense" logo (the water version of EnergyStar).

REDUCE THE SIZE OF GRASS LAWNS

Lawns limit the amount of water that can soak into the ground and will need large amounts of fertilizers and pesticides. By letting your grass grow taller, you also let the roots grow deeper, and leaving the clippings provides a natural fertilizer. This will improve the lawn's ability to absorb water, stabilize soil, control weeds, and not dry out.

PLANT NATURAL BUFFERS ALONG THE EDGE OF WATER BODIES AND WETLANDS

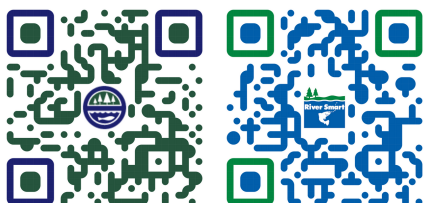
These buffers - made up of trees, shrubs, woody and herbaceous perennials and ground cover - prevent shoreline erosion, reduce flood impacts, capture and treat runoff by trapping sediment and removing nutrients, regulate water temperature, and provide food and habitat for wildlife.

Have your SEPTIC TANK regularly PUMPED AND INSPECTED

A faulty system can release harmful bacteria to our waterways and can be costly to repair. Every system is different, but a good rule of thumb is to pump out every 3 to 5 years.

DISPOSE OF UNUSED/UNWANTED medication IN THE TRASH

The fate of these chemicals interacting in the environment is still unclear and we are only just beginning to understand their effects on aquatic organisms.



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