

# STORM WATER

## What is storm water runoff?

Precipitation from rain or snow that flows over the ground.

### Facts

- ◆ Impervious surfaces like streets prevent storm water from naturally soaking into the ground.
- ◆ Storm water can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt and other pollutants and flow into a storm sewer system that is discharged directly to the Red River.
- ◆ Polluted runoff is the nation's greatest threat to clean water.
- ◆ Polluted storm water often affects drinking water sources which, in turn, can affect human health and increase drinking water treatment costs.



- ◆ Debris (plastic bags, six-pack rings, bottles and cigarette butts) washing into the river can choke, suffocate or disable aquatic life such as ducks, fish, turtles and birds.
- ◆ Bacteria can wash into recreation areas and create health hazards.
- ◆ Sediment can cloud the water and destroy aquatic habitats.
- ◆ Common pollutants that can wash off our yards and streets include:
  - Phosphorus:** From tree leaves, grass clippings, soil erosion, fertilizer, pet and wildlife waste
  - Eroding soil:** From exposed soil on construction sites, sparse lawns, and unprotected garden beds set too close to hard surfaces like streets, sidewalks and driveways
  - Bacteria:** From pet and wildlife waste, failing septic systems
  - Toxins:** Oil, paint, cleaners, etc. spilled on streets, sidewalks, and driveways or dumped down storm drains

## What can you do?

- ◆ Do not overwater your lawn.
- ◆ Pick up pet waste.
- ◆ Repair car leaks and dispose of fluids and waste at designated drop-off or recycling locations.
- ◆ Wash car on a lawn or other unpaved surface.
- ◆ Clean paint brushes in a sink.
- ◆ Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly.
- ◆ Compost yard waste instead of sweeping it into the street.
- ◆ Select native plants and grass which require less fertilizer and pesticides.
- ◆ Buy biodegradable, recycled and recyclable products as often as possible.
- ◆ Reduce paved area and increase the vegetated area in your yard.

