

Clean Water And A Clean Hudson River Are Important To All Of Us

It's up to all of us to make it happen. In recent years "point" sources of water pollution like industrial wastes from factories have been greatly reduced. Now, more than 60 percent of water pollution comes from diffuse or "non-point sources" like cars leaking oil, fertilizers from farms and gardens, and failing septic tanks. All these sources add up to a big pollution problem. But each of us can do small things to help clean up our water too- and that adds up to a pollution solution!

Why do we need clean water?

Having clean water is of primary importance for our health, environment and economy. Clean water provides recreation, commercial opportunities, fish habitat, drinking water and adds beauty to our landscape. All of us benefit from clean water—and all of us have a role in getting and keeping our groundwater, lakes, streams and Hudson River clean.

What's the problem with pet waste?

It's a health risk to pets and people, especially children. It's a nuisance in our neighborhoods. Pet waste is full of bacteria that can make people sick. It gets washed from lawns, curbs and fields into the storm drain. It then ends up in a lake, stream or the Hudson River without being treated first. Bacteria ends up in the water and fish. People who swim in that water or eat those fish can get very sick. The nutrients from the waste can cause excess algae to grow. Algae looks bad, smells bad, and harms water quality.

As algae decays, the process uses up oxygen in the water that fish need.

Clean Water Tips:

How can you get rid of pet waste and help keep our waters clean? Here are some options.

- Never dump pet waste in storm drains, catch basins or bodies of water.
- Scoop it up and flush it down the toilet. That's best because then your community sewage treatment plant or your septic system treats the pet waste.
- Seal the waste in a plastic bag and throw it in the garbage, or bury small quantities in your yard (away from vegetable gardens) where it can decompose slowly. (This is legal in most areas, but check local laws.)
- If your community does not require you to remove pet waste, see what you can do to raise awareness and perhaps enact a "pooper-scooper" law.

To find out more about the problems of pet waste and what you can do to prevent water pollution, call your local Soil and Water Conservation District, or visit the Lower Hudson Coalition of Conservation Districts website at www.lhccd.org



This information is brought to you by the Lower Hudson Coalition of Conservation Districts. Established in 1998, the members have been working with individuals to coordinate state and federal conservation programs at a local level. The Districts provide technical assistance and education on soil, water, and related natural resources. Municipalities, farmers, and landowners use this information in making proper land use decisions.