

SOAK UP THE RAIN



Rethinking Water Flow

To save our waterways from pollution, protect ourselves from flooding, and restore groundwater, **it is essential that we rethink water flow in our borough.** Highland Park's stormwater management newsletter is meant to encourage such rethinking.

This issue focuses on storm drains. Storm drains can be found on almost any street. They are placed to catch stormwater and are connected to pipes that carry the water to the closest stream or river.

Sustainable Highland Park invites you to "Adopt a Storm Drain." See next page.

Storm Drains Can Cause Problems

We need storm drains, but they carry pollutants to streams and to the Raritan River. Toxic chemicals, bacteria, and plastics lying in the street are swept up and into storm drains by stormwater. Trash and leaves carried into streams clog waterways and harm aquatic wildlife.

Designed to prevent flooding, storm drains can cause flooding when they are clogged with leaves and trash. Flooded streets are dangerous for cars and people.

Water rushing through storm drains can overwhelm streams. Pipes from storm drains routinely dump more water into our streams than will fit between the streambanks. The streams flood and the banks erode, damaging property and wildlife habitat.

Storm drains are needed because impervious surfaces, like buildings and pavement disrupt the natural water cycle. Too little of our rainwater water is absorbed into the soil. Groundwater is becoming seriously depleted. Trees and other plants cannot flourish. We are losing the continuous gentle flowing of water through the soil that maintains streams and rivers, fills wells and other water supplies, and supports the health and happiness of us all.

How You Can Help Manage Storm Drain Problems

(1) Volunteer for Sustainable Highland Park's "Adopt a Storm Drain" program.

(2) Help keep streets clear of trash and leaves.

(3) Never dump chemicals, pathogens, animal feces or any other kind of waste into streets or storm drains.

(4) Report clogged storm drains to Highland Park's Department of Public Works (732 514-1277).

(5) Learn why restoring groundwater is critically important in urbanized areas like Highland Park.

(6) Take note of where the water goes that falls on your roof. If it goes directly into the street, see if it can be redirected to soak into the ground.

(7) Support the use of green infrastructure, including rain barrels, rain gardens and bioswales throughout Highland Park. Look for a new rain garden to be constructed this fall at the Highland Park Public Library.

For information, visit the Borough's stormwater management webpage and the US Environmental Protection Agency's Soak up the Rain website.

What is a Bioswale?

A bioswale, one type of green infrastructure, is a long, channeled depression or trench that receives rainwater runoff (as from a street or parking lot) and has vegetation (such as grasses, flowering herbs, and shrubs) and organic matter (such as mulch) to slow water infiltration and filter out pollutants.

Materials prepared by The Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership.

For more information visit lowerraritanwatershed.org and sign up for our email list!

Upcoming Events

October 6 Stormwater Utilities Workshop 3-4 pm (register on our website!)

November 19 clean-up of the Highland Park floodplain (register on our website)

Highland Park's webpage for stormwater management:
<https://www.hpboro.com/departments/water-sewer/stormwater-management>

Website for Sustainable Highland Park:
sustainablehighlandpark.org

Photo Descriptions:

Picture 1: Dry leaves, grass, and trash pile up on storm drain labeled 'Dump No Waste.'

Picture 2: A bioswale surrounded by sidewalk. Wet soil and green plants show the effects of recent rain.



Share your stormwater management photos with us on Instagram! @lowerraritanwatershed #stormwater