
Common Stormwater Pollutants and Sources

Solids – Trash and illegally dumped debris

Sediment – Construction sites and areas of disturbed soil

Nutrients – Fertilized areas and organic material (e.g. food scraps)

Bacteria – Animal and pet wastes

Trace metals – Automobiles

Toxic and Synthetic Chemicals – Pesticides, vehicles, spills, and illegal dumping



Stormwater - What, Why, and Who

What is Stormwater Runoff?

Stormwater runoff is rainfall, snowmelt, and surface runoff that flows over land or impervious surfaces such as buildings, roads, and parking lots, and does not infiltrate into the ground. At New Mexico State University, all stormwater runoff on the west side of the campus either flows down the College Avenue storm drain or into the regional pond at the northwest side of campus; and on the east side all stormwater flows into either College Arroyo, Tortugas Arroyo, Mission Bell Arroyo, or Cholla Arroyo. Depending on the amount of rainfall, these waters may reach the Rio Grande!

All the stormwater that enters the storm drains, ponds, and arroyos **is not treated**.

What is Stormwater Pollution?

Stormwater is a leading cause of surface water pollution. Stormwater runoff collects anything on the ground surface, such as trash, oil, pesticides, sediment, bacteria (like pet waste), and other chemicals, and then deposits them into our waterways. This runoff can make our waterways an unhealthy place to live, work, and play. Untreated stormwater entering our arroyos can result in harmful bacteria or parasites getting into the stormwater system which can spread disease to wildlife, pets, and even people.

Various pollutants such as trash, garbage, oil, fertilizer, pesticides, sediment, and chemicals are deposited on soil and impervious surfaces due to our activities. During storm events, these pollutants are washed off and flow to storm drains, ponds, or arroyos.

Why Should I Care?

If you litter or dump your trash, it can eventually end up in an arroyo during a storm event, and harm the wildlife that makes this region so special. Wildlife that ingests plastic found in arroyos can suffer internal injuries and death. Items like plastic six-pack holders can trap birds and mammals. Lizards can crawl inside bottles or cans and become trapped and eventually die of overheating. In addition, litter, trash, and debris can clog drainage infrastructure and cause roads and structures to flood.



Household hazardous wastes like insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil, and other auto fluids can poison aquatic life.

The university's storm drainage system discharges into normally dry arroyos, but the water can eventually reach the Rio Grande. The Rio Grande is currently considered to be impaired and is included on the Environmental Protection Agency's impaired waterways list under the Clean Water Act. The Rio

Grande is impaired based upon elevated bacteria levels.

Who Can Improve Water Quality?

Simple answer, you can. Many of your daily activities have the potential to cause stormwater pollution. How you manage your day to day activities can determine the quality of your environment. Remember, "You are the solution to pollution!" Here's how you can help prevent stormwater pollution:

- Don't be trashy – Put trash in its place.
- Keep your vehicles tuned up and repair fuel or fluid leaks quickly.
- Wash your car on the lawn, not the driveway.
- Never pour used oil, paint thinners, and other pollutants into storm drains or waterways or on the ground. Take these household hazardous wastes to the Amador Avenue Recycling Center at 2825 W. Amador Avenue. For more information on where to recycle items visit: <http://www.ofs.nmsu.edu/SWMP.html>
- Properly use and store all household chemicals. Clean up spills quickly by absorbing and disposing of the items properly. Do not hose spill residue down the drain.
- Scoop the poop! - Pick up pet waste and either flush it or place it in the trash.



Sources:

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