

# STORM DRAIN STENCILING

## THE STREET - STREAM CONNECTION

CUYAHOGA SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Most people want to protect their local streams, rivers, and lakes. They value their clean water as a drinking source and for recreation, as well as fish and wildlife habitat. Did you know that these same people are responsible for the contamination of local waterways?

Most of the pollution in our waterways does not come from industries or factories (point source pollution). Today, most pollution affecting streams comes from **nonpoint sources**, such as storm drains. This means that pollution does not come from a single point, but comes from storm water (rainwater) running across the land, picking up motor oil, insecticides, fertilizers, road salts and garbage before depositing it in streams.



Storm drains along many neighborhood streets collect the contaminated water and dump it directly into streams, **without being treated first**. Storm drains are merely pipes of waste transfer – from our streets to our creeks.

Nonpoint sources are more difficult to control and eliminate, so that's why we

need a joint effort by businesses, industries, and citizens like you!

**Did you know that 80% of stream pollution is due to storm water runoff?**

The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) estimates that in the Cuyahoga and Lake Erie watersheds, there are 19.7 billion gallons of storm water emptied into streams each year. **No wonder our streams are polluted!**

The pollution is not only dangerous for fish and wildlife, but it is also dangerous for people! People are warned to avoid contact with the water, including activities such as swimming and canoeing.



## Why Stencil Storm Drain?

Communities must develop Storm water Management Plans. This project is recommended by the U.S. EPA as one way to meet **two** of the six Minimum

Control Requirements that cities must address.

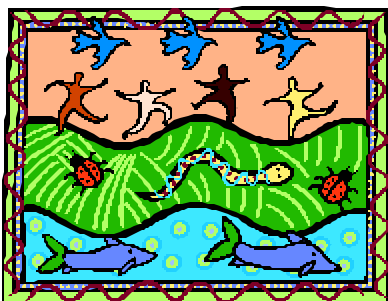
**Most people are unaware that motor oil, antifreeze, paints, litter, and grass clippings dumped into storm drains ends up being carried directly to nearby streams—even if those streams that are now in pipes. Storm drain stenciling is a simple way to alert your neighbors of the connection between your street and nearby waterways. Once most people understand their actions could hurt the environment, they are more willing to consider alternatives to dumping!**

## **Who Should Stencil Storm Drains?**

Anyone can stencil storm drains. It's a great volunteer activity for schools, church groups, families and interested citizens. The activity is best suited to children over the age of ten.

## **Tell Me More About Storm Drain Stenciling**

Storm drain stenciling provides volunteers with the opportunity to educate neighbors. Volunteers inform neighbors that chemicals and trash dumped in the storm drains flow right into streams by stenciling: "Dump No Waste – Drains to Creek" in front of storm drains and delivering fish-shaped educational fliers to homeowners.



## **How Do I Get Started?**

First, contact your community service director to express your interest and to determine if this project would be permitted. You may also contact Cuyahoga SWCD for copies of the storm drain stenciling handbook and additional information.

Organize a group of at least five people, obtain a storm drain stenciling kit, and set aside three hours to complete the stenciling. The kit consists of instructions, fish-shaped educational leaflets and the stencil "Dump No Waste – Drains to Stream".

For more information, please contact:

Cuyahoga Soil & Water  
Conservation District  
6100 W. Canal Road  
Valley View, OH 44125  
216-524-6580

### **A Little About Us...**

The Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) promotes land preservation and stewardship through conservation education, technical leadership and guidance.

Areas of expertise include:

- Erosion & sediment control
- Urban stream restoration
- Conservation easements
- Construction site reviews
- Public Involvement and Public Education

This fact sheet was originally produced through the Cuyahoga River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Stream Stewardship Program. It has been modified to assist communities in the implementation of their mandated Storm Water Management Plans.