

# What is nonpoint source pollution?

Nonpoint source (NPS) pollution comes from many diverse sources. Rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground causes NPS pollution. As the runoff moves, it picks up and carries natural and human-made pollutants, finally depositing them into lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and ground-water.



*Nonpoint source pollutants running along a parking lot toward a stream.*

These pollutants include:

- Excess fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides from both agricultural lands and residential areas;
- Oil, grease, and toxic chemicals from urban areas;
- Sediment from poorly managed construction sites, agricultural and forest lands, and eroding stream banks;

- Salt from crop irrigation;
- Acid drainage from abandoned mines; and
- Bacteria and nutrients from agriculture, pet wastes, and poorly maintained septic systems.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NPS pollution is the leading cause of water quality problems in the nation. The effects of non-point source pollutants on specific waters vary and may not always be fully quantified. However, it is known that these pollutants have harmful effects on drinking water supplies, recreation activities, fisheries, and wildlife. The Water Quality Control Division within the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is the agency that administers the federal Clean Water Act and oversees water quality in Colorado.

## “We all live downstream”

**Do your part to help keep our water clean!**

### Contacts

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Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment (303) 692-3500  
Water Quality Control Division  
[www.cdphe.state.co.us/wq/wqhom.asp](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/wq/wqhom.asp)

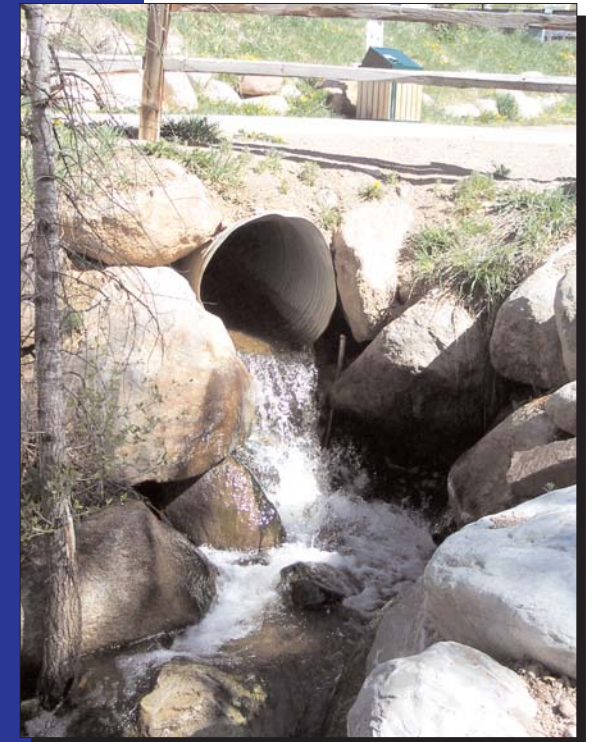
City of Glenwood Springs (970) 384-6400  
Town of Carbondale (970) 963-2733  
Town of Basalt (970) 927-4701  
Town of Snowmass Village (970) 923-5110  
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## Keeping Our Waters Clean



*A guide to help you reduce nonpoint source pollution*

# How can you reduce your amount of nonpoint source pollution?

## Maintain Vehicles

- When washing your car, use a commercial car wash which recycles water and does not directly discharge into water sources.



Using hose nozzles with a valve for activities like car washing can reduce the amount of water used and resulting runoff.

- If you must wash your car at home, do so on the lawn where soapy water can filter into the ground rather than running along hardened surfaces into water sources.

- Keep your car functioning properly to avoid leaks and spills.

- Dispose of oils and grease properly at a garage or auto parts store.

## Manage Your Household Waste

- Around the house or around town, pick up pet waste and dispose of it in the trash.

- Dispose of your garbage properly and recycle when possible (consult your local phone directory for pick-up or drop-off locations).

## Use River Friendly Landscaping

- Plant native grasses that require less water.

- Plant trees, shrubs, and ground cover, and use straw bales or retaining walls to decrease the amount of erosion around your home.

- Reduce the amount of impervious surfaces by using wood chips, stones, or gravel rather than concrete for walkways and decks.

- Protect existing trees and shrubs as they encourage infiltration of water into the ground and discourage erosion along river banks.

## Practice Smart Yard Maintenance

- Avoid excess evaporation by not watering lawns between 10 am and 6 pm.

- Avoid over-watering lawns which leads to increased runoff of pollutants.

- Avoid using excess fertilizers and pesticides in the yard; don't fertilize prior to a rainstorm; and seek natural alternatives to fertilizers and pesticides.

- Where possible, compost organic yard waste including lawn clippings, and return natural nutrients to the soil.



Using natural or limited amounts of pesticides and herbicides helps to keep these chemicals out of local water supplies.

## Buy and Use Products Responsibly

- Purchase only non-toxic products including water-based products.

- Dispose of chemicals properly according to product instructions.

- Do not dump excess chemicals into storm drains. Take them to a hazardous waste center (call your county government for locations).



In many communities storm drains empty directly into rivers.

## Maintain Your Septic System

- Have your septic tank pumped regularly (a 3-bedroom house with a 1,000 gallon tank requires pumping every 3-5 years).

- Do not use toilets as trash cans.

## Report Illegal Dumping or Unusual River Conditions

- Report any changes in river color or odor.

- Report any unusual looking substances discharging from a storm outlet.

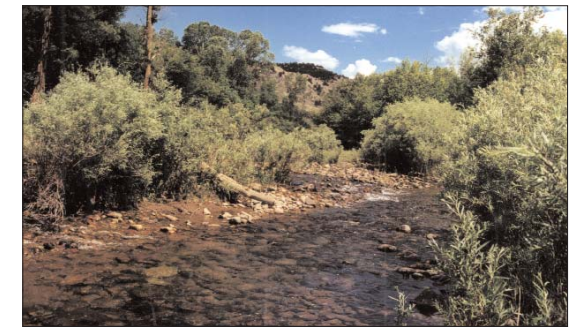
- Report any illegal dumping activity.

For more information visit: [www.roaringfork.org](http://www.roaringfork.org)

*The Roaring Fork Conservancy is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the Roaring Fork River and its tributaries. It acts as a liaison between citizens and the proper authorities when issues arise over water quality and river health. Although we do not have regulatory authority, we will help citizens contact the agency that oversees their concern.*



Roaring Fork Conservancy staff working with students to stencil storm water drains and raise awareness.



Using these guidelines, you can help ensure that our rivers, lakes, and groundwater flow clear and clean.