

Shrubs to Plant for Watershed Protection:

- Streamco or Bankers Willow
- Red Osier Dogwood
- Smooth Alder
- Virginia Creeper
- Buttonbush

Shrubs to Plant for Watershed Wildlife Habitat:

- American Elderberry
- Common Spicebush
- Winterberry holly
- Ninebark

Quick Tips:

To restore and protect the water quality, wildlife habitat and recreational uses of your streamside property.

- Do** plant buffers of native trees and shrubs along the stream
- Do** maintain stream-bank protection structures such as rock slopes and walls
- Do** build steps or ramps where the stream is accessed often
- Do** avoid using chemicals and fertilizers anywhere near a stream
- Do** keep your septic tank in good working condition
- Do** pick up pet droppings to keep excess nutrients out of stream
- Do** wash your car on the lawn or at a car wash to keep soapy, salty water out of storm drains

- Don't** disturb the stream bed or banks, place fill or remove gravel
- Don't** remove vegetation along the banks.
- Don't** remove logs unless you have a NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Permit
- Don't** dig in the stream, change its course or drive along the shoreline
- Don't** allow pets or grazing animals near the stream edge
- Don't** dump old tires, car parts, chemicals, plastic bottles, paint cans or other garbage into the stream
- Don't** dump waste oil or other contaminants into storm drains
- Don't** throw lawn clippings or other yard waste into the stream

Some activities in or adjacent to a stream require a permit from the NYS DEC. Call (585) 226-2466 to avoid a violation.

BLACK CREEK WATERSHED COALITION

c/o City Place
50 WEST MAIN ST, STE 8100
ROCHESTER NY 14614

BLACK CREEK WATERSHED COALITION

Watershed Care



What is a watershed?

A *watershed* is the area of land that water flows across or seeps into on its way to a river, lake or stream. Watersheds are separated from each other by high points such as the crest of a hill.

Everyone lives in a watershed and should be able to enjoy healthy streams and the opportunities they provide. Almost every human activity — from lawn care to recreation — affects the quantity and quality of water in the watershed. We share our watershed with wildlife that also depend on a healthy watershed for food, shelter and water.

It is your watershed – and you can make a difference!

Why should the watershed be restored and protected?

Why should there be healthy streams?

Phone: 585-753-2034
E-mail: rbell@monroecounty.gov

www.blackcreekwatershed.org

The health of a watershed and its inhabitants depends on clean water. Preventing pollution in streams avoids costly impacts to our health, our community and our economy.

Risks to Unprotected Watersheds

- Increased rates of erosion
- More frequent and larger floods
- Impaired streams and lakes due to misguided lawn care practices resulting in excess fertilizer, pesticide and sediment transport; stormwater runoff resulting in sediment, oil, gas, grease and litter transport; and leaking septic systems resulting nutrients and bacteria transport to streams.

Leading to

- Loss of private land
- Loss of aquatic and terrestrial habitat
- Polluted drinking water

Benefits of Watershed Protection

- Safer drinking water supply
- Healthier wildlife habitat
- Improved aesthetics
- Flood retention
- Increased property values
- Safer environment for children to explore
- Better opportunities for swimming, fishing, and boating
- Reduced threats to property from erosion



Stormwater Management: Pollutants and Flooding

Parking lots, driveways, streets and rooftops prevent rain and snow from falling directly on the ground and infiltrating, or soaking, into the soil. Rainfall on these surfaces becomes stormwater runoff. As it flows through ditches, culverts and street drains, stormwater accumulates pollutants such as fertilizer, yard waste, animal waste, oil, road salts, chemicals, soil particles and litter, and flows untreated into waterways.

Too much runoff quickly draining into streams can cause local flooding — stormwater that is allowed to soak into the ground enters streams more slowly. Stormwater runoff is slowed and filtered by vegetation.

Where does runoff go when it leaves my property?

Stormwater in developed areas flows into the ground, wetlands and streams or is piped to a “dry well,” ditch, wetland or stream.

Separated Sewer System – storm sewers carry rainwater to streams, sanitary sewers carry wastewater to the sewage treatment plant.

Combined Sewer System – storm and sanitary sewers both drain to the wastewater treatment plants. During heavy rains wastewater treatment plants are unable to process the excess rainwater so some of the sewer flow (including raw sewage) discharges directly into streams. Sewer overflows can be extremely harmful to fish, wildlife and US!

How can I control runoff?

Swales and rain gardens slow down runoff by allowing storm water to infiltrate soil slowly, replenishing groundwater and filtering pollutants.

- Drain sump pumps into lawns instead of the sewer or road ditch.
- Replace driveways and walkways with gravel, brick, flagstones or interlocking pavers to allow more stormwater to infiltrate the soil instead of flowing directly into sewers.
- Install gravel trenches or French drains along driveways.
- Disconnect downspouts from the sewer system – downspouts should drain into vegetated areas to reduce sewer overflows, stream flooding and basement flooding.
- Direct downspouts into a rain barrel for watering gardens during dry periods.
- Inspect and maintain septic tanks routinely to prevent leaks or overflows.
- Plant vegetation along stream banks to trap soil in runoff.



Lawn and Garden Care:

Everything you apply to your lawn can potentially contaminate surface and ground waters. Good lawn care practices not only add to the value of your property, but also contribute to healthier, cleaner streams and water supplies.

Start a compost pile

Use grass clippings and yard waste to build a compost pile instead of dumping them on stream banks where they can wash into the stream, adding nutrients, fertilizers and pesticides, and contributing to unhealthy algae growth. Add kitchen scraps to build healthy, natural, soil-enriching compost that can replace fertilizer to improve soil structure, encourage root growth, aerate soil, retain water and release nutrients slowly.

Manage animal waste

Pet waste left on paved surfaces and in floodplains washes into storm sewers and streams, carrying excess nutrients and harmful bacteria. Discard pet waste in trash or sanitary system.

Don't feed wildlife! Waste from geese, ducks and rodents contain bacteria that can contaminate surface and ground water, causing beach closings and health concerns.

Use and dispose of chemicals properly

Never pour motor oil, paints or chemicals down storm drains or sinks. They can be harmful to wildlife, septic systems and drinking water supplies. Recycle used automotive fluids and chemicals; clean up and report spills.

Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

- Select native disease-resistant and pest-resistant plants
- Plant the right plant for the location
- Maintain healthy soil — have your soil tested to determine exact fertilizer needs, use compost or slow-release fertilizer and keep fertilizer off your driveway and sidewalk.
- Monitor and correctly identify weeds, insects, diseases – increase your personal comfort threshold (a few weeds and insects are tolerable), to avoid excessive, unnecessary and costly chemical applications; apply the proper treatment for the problem (remember: insecticides kill beneficial insects too!)



Stream-bank Maintenance:

The cost of having an unobstructed view of the stream is usually loss of valuable property from an eroding stream bank. Stream bank erosion can destroy healthy streams. Animals and people trampling on stream banks can destroy vegetation leaving the soil unprotected. Heavy rainfall loosens unprotected soil and debris buildup in the streambed can cause damming and flooding.

Streamside residents often replace stream buffers with manicured lawns mowed right to the edge. The shallow root system of lawn grasses do not sufficiently protect the stream bank from eroding, and are ineffective in trapping pollutants from entering the stream. Eroding stream banks result in muddy water, which blocks sunlight for plants, clogs fish gills, reduces oxygen in the water and buries stream-bottom habitat.

Signs of Soil Erosion

- Widening or deepening stream channel
- Undercut trees falling into stream channel
- Steep stream banks, often with bare soil
- Muddy water in stream or on paved surfaces following rainfall
- Gullies or rills forming on lawn areas
- Deposits of fine sediment in low areas

Stream Buffers Protect Your Property and the Environment

A good stream buffer is undisturbed land along a stream bank with native trees, shrubs and understory vegetation that have roots that stabilize the soil to prevent it from being washed away. Buffers also provide nesting sites, food and cover for wildlife, filter out harmful pollutants and shade the stream, keeping the water cool for fish and other aquatic life.