

# BENTON COUNTY STORMWATER PROGRAM

## -Pollutants-

**Water pollutants** are substances that alter the physical, chemical or biological composition of water. Pollutants can cause harm to humans, plants, and animals. Grease, oils, detergents, pesticides, fertilizers, sewage, metals, and sediment are just a few examples of pollutants that can ruin water quality.

There are many ways that pollutants can enter streams and rivers. We don't always think of pollutants when it rains but the runoff from land and pavement surfaces and structures carries toxic substances directly into our streams and rivers. Toxic substances are also sometimes dumped into storm drains. Runoff in storm drains and ditches flows *untreated* directly to streams and rivers.

**Pollutants don't just hurt streams and rivers.** Pollutants penetrate the ground and seep into groundwater sources (aquifers). **Nearly 40 percent of Americans** rely on groundwater for drinking water. Once polluted, an aquifer may be unusable for decades, or even hundreds of years.

Pollutants also change the chemical balance of rivers and streams. The pollutants make it difficult for plants and animals to live and reproduce. This degrades the health of the watershed, sometimes to the point that life cannot be supported.

### What Can You Do?

- Don't dump *anything* but water down a storm drain.
- Wash your car on the lawn.
- Don't over-fertilize lawns and gardens.
- Keep your vehicles free of oil leaks.
- Reconsider using copper based herbicides to kill roof/lawn moss.



### Report Water Quality Issues

<https://www.co.benton.or.us/community/webform/contact-us>

### Learn More!

**Marys River Watershed Council**

<https://www.mrwc.org/>

**Luckiamute Watershed Council**

<https://www.luckiamutelwc.org/>

**Mid-coast Watershed Council**

<http://www.midcoastwatersheds.org/>

**Long Tom Watershed Council**

<https://www.longtom.org/>

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**Or visit to learn more:**  
[pw.bentoncountyor.gov/stormwater](http://pw.bentoncountyor.gov/stormwater)