

MAINTAIN YOUR DRAIN

Runoff from driveways, lawns, houses and parking lots can carry pollutants such as oil, paint and chemicals down storm sewers and into nearby lakes, streams, rivers, and wetlands. Cleaning out storm drains can help keep leaves, grass, litter and other items from getting washed into lakes, streams, rivers, and wetlands. In this activity you will maintain your storm drain by cleaning out the drains and gutters on your street to protect nearby water sources from contaminants.

Outcome

Storm drains are directly connected to water resources, and keeping litter out of drains can prevent water pollution.

Audience

Youth (ages 6+), adults

Time

60 minutes

Concepts

- Storm drains carry pollution directly to nearby bodies of water.
- Cleaning storm drains keep pollution from entering water resources.
- Keeping leaves, grass clippings and other items out of the streets prevents materials from entering storm drains.

Supplies

- Clear plastic bags
- Protective gloves



MAINTAIN YOUR DRAIN

Procedure

- Wearing the protective gloves, have participants collect everything from the storm drain and street in front of your house, school or organization's building during a specific time period. Children should be supervised, wear gloves, and should only pick up what they recognize and know is safe to touch.
- Put the items into clear plastic bags so participants can see the items through the bags.
- Analyze the items found in the gutter and discuss where it might have come from.
- Ask participants if they want to adopt a specific storm drain to keep free of litter or have them make a commitment to keep their own blocks litter-free. Then, share what you are doing and why with your neighbors in the area.

Discussion questions

- Were you surprised by the amount of litter you collected? What was the strangest item you found? The largest?
- How do you think all the litter ends up in the gutters? How could it potentially end up in nearby water sources such as lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands?
- Do you think this activity has an impact? Why or why not?
- How can you encourage your neighbors to make a commitment to keep their yards free of litter?

Additional activity ideas

"This Drains To River!" Mark the Storm Drains

When volunteers mark or stencil a message next to the storm drains in the street, it reminds everyone that whatever goes down the storm drain ends up in the nearest body of water. Visit www.fmr.org/storm-drain-stenciling for storm drain stenciling resources. Storm drain stenciling must be coordinated with city government and your watershed.