

Why Care About the City's Storm Water?



Storm Water Carries Pollution

Storm sewer systems are designed to prevent streets from flooding during rainstorms. They are built to move water as quickly as possible from the street to a lake, stream, ditch or pond.

Unfortunately, storm water is usually polluted. Some contaminants carried by storm water include:

- Grass clippings and yard waste
- Lawn fertilizers and pesticides
- Salt and sand used for deicing
- Soil from construction sites
- Pet wastes
- Oil and other fluids from vehicles
- Soap used to wash cars and driveways
- Litter

Storm Water is Untreated

Storm water is not treated at the sewage treatment plant. For the most part, water flowing into Worthington's storm sewers is discharged directly into Lake Okabena, Whiskey Ditch, County Ditch 12 or County Ditch 6.

Sewer grates remove some of the sticks, leaves and litter from storm water. Larger particles like gravel and sand may settle out in storm sewer catch basins. Smaller silt particles and pollutants like nutrients and bacteria remain suspended in the flowing water and are deposited in lakes and streams.

Some of the newer neighborhoods in Worthington have storm water ponds that do a better job of removing pollutants.



Storm Water Pollution Contributes to Algae Blooms

Bluegreen algae blooms are ugly and smelly. They can even be poisonous to people and pets. Like green plants, bluegreen algae blooms need nutrients to thrive. Phosphorus is the main nutrient leading to excess algae growth.

Soil, grass clippings, leaves, lawn fertilizers, soaps and pet wastes all contain phosphorus. Left on the streets, driveways and parking lots, these pollutants are carried by storm sewers to lakes and streams.

Phosphorus in storm water runoff likely contributes to the frequency and severity of bluegreen algae blooms in Lake Okabena.



Worthington's Watersheds

