



# Storm Drain Stenciling

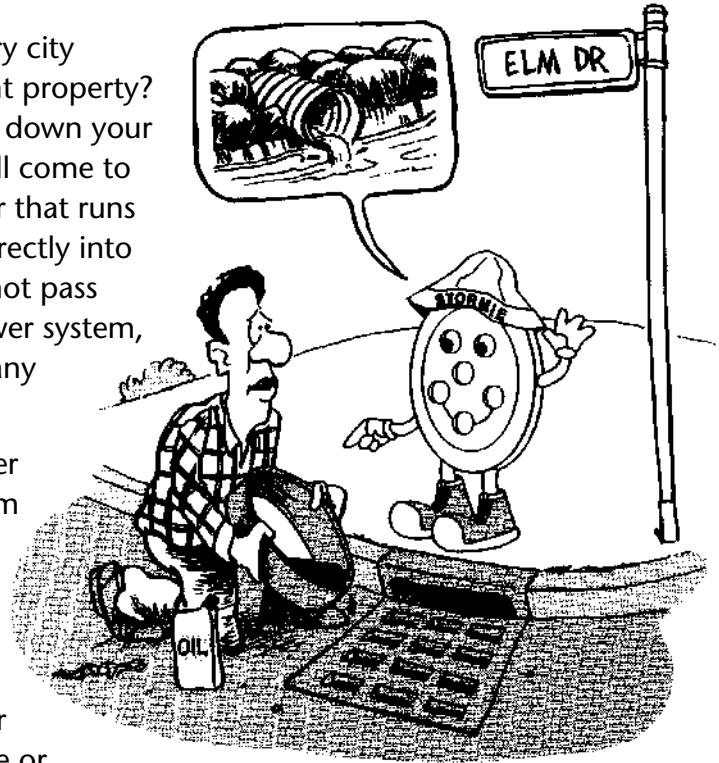
## How You Can Prevent Water Pollution

A SERIES OF WATER QUALITY FACT SHEETS ABOUT STORMWATER RUNOFF

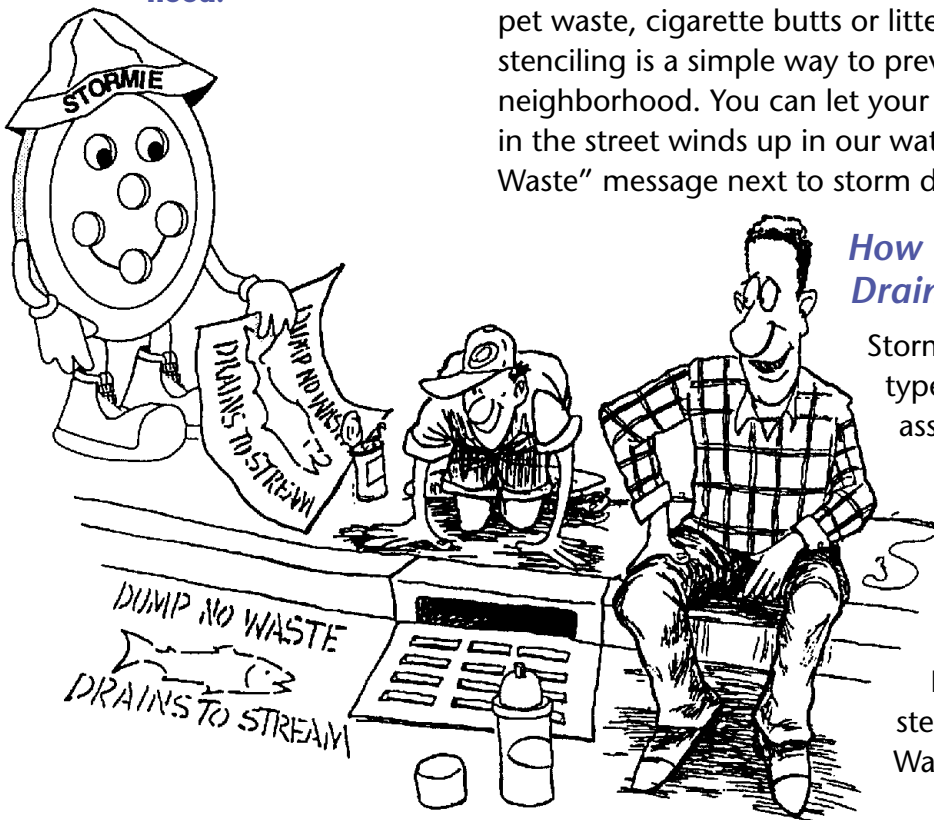
**D**id you know that every city street is like waterfront property? It's true. Just take a walk down your street. Before long, you'll come to a storm drain. Any water that runs down this drain flows directly into our waterways. It does not pass through the sanitary sewer system, and it does not receive any kind of treatment.

This means that whatever we put down these storm drains winds up in the lakes and streams where we go fishing, boating and swimming.

People who would never dream of polluting a lake or stream might pour antifreeze, fertilizer, paint or used motor oil, or toss pet waste, cigarette butts or litter down storm drains. Storm drain stenciling is a simple way to prevent this kind of pollution in your neighborhood. You can let your neighbors know that anything dumped in the street winds up in our waterways by stenciling a "Dump No Waste" message next to storm drains.



**Storm drain stenciling is one way to help prevent runoff pollution in your neighborhood.**



### How to Sign Up for Storm Drain Stenciling

Storm drain stenciling is a great activity for all types of organizations from neighborhood associations to scout groups to service clubs. By participating, the members of your group will become more aware of the close link between our streets and waterways. And you will leave behind a reminder for others.

For more information about storm drain stenciling in your community, contact Water Action Volunteers, 608/264-8948.

## It All Adds Up

We've cleaned up most of the big sources of water pollution like industries and sewage treatment plants. Now much of the pollution in our lakes and streams comes from small, scattered sources. Stenciling the storm drains in your neighborhood may seem like a small thing to do for clean water, but it is important.

It's up to each of us to reduce the pollution that comes from our cars, streets, driveways and yards. Together, our actions will add up to cleaner water for us and for our children.

## MAKING YOUR MARK – SOME PRACTICAL ADVICE

### *Getting permission*

You must have permission before stenciling storm drains. You or the sponsor can get permission from the local Department of Public Works. To stencil storm drains on private property (for example, in parking lots for businesses or apartments), you need permission from the property owner.

### *Organizing your teams*

Before you start, take a careful look at the area your group will cover. Divide the area into routes and assign a team to each route so no storm drain goes unstenciled. If you have a large area to cover, have someone do a "quality check" to be sure all drains were stenciled. Assign another person to collect, clean up and return the stencil kits.

### *Telling your story*

Send a news release or call your local newspaper, radio or television station announcing when and where your group will be stenciling. News coverage will educate more people about the importance of keeping storm drains clean. Another way to let the neighbors know what you are doing is to hang cards on their front doors explaining the project. Your sponsor has a supply of these cards.

### *Painting*

Fair weather is essential for this project! The pavement must be dry and warm. Check your paint can for specific instructions. Use the wire brush in your kit to clean the area in the gutter next to the storm drain. Then, tape the stencil in place and spray paint the message. Two light coats of paint work better than one heavy coat. The best kind of paint to use is a traffic zone latex. White is the best color because it is the most visible and least likely to fade. Wherever possible, paint on the downhill side of the storm drain. This way your message won't be worn off by flowing water or covered by debris and leaves. A stencil's lifespan depends on use. When paint builds up and blurs the message (typically five to ten stenciling events), discard the stencil.

### *Stenciling Safety*

During a stenciling outing, your group will frequently be in the street. Please follow all traffic safety practices. Wear safety vests or brightly colored clothes and be alert. On busy streets, choose a time of day when there is less traffic. When working with children, assign an adult to each team.



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