



## CLEAN RIVERS, CLEAN LAKES = CLEAN DRINKING WATER

The single most detrimental factor that impacts the health of our groundwater, headwaters, marshes, rivers, lakes and watersheds is human activity. Whether intentional or not, our day to day actions are a major contributor to polluted runoff which infiltrates the ground, water table, storm and sanitary sewers, and rivers, streams and lakes, which we depend on for drinking, fishing and swimming. Everyday household activities are a major contributor to contaminated runoff, which is among the most serious sources of water degradation. When we allow rain to wash pet waste, fertilizers and pesticides from lawns and oil from driveways into our ground water and storm sewers or when we flush paint, solvent and toxic household chemicals down the sink, we are contaminating one of our most precious resources – our fresh water. Our actions can harm or help maintain the quality of our water resources.

**PLEASE MAKE A COMMITMENT TO FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES BELOW SO WE CAN KEEP OUR WATER CLEAN**

### AT HOME

- Pick up pet waste and dispose appropriately.
- Never dump used motor oil, paint or household chemicals on the ground or into storm drains.
- Don't pour household chemicals down the sink or down the toilet. Take to a hazardous waste depot.
- Read and follow directions regarding the use and disposal of household chemicals and their containers.
- Use non-toxic alternatives to conventional home cleaning products.
- Choose not to use fabric softeners when washing clothes and you will prevent more than 10 toxic chemicals from entering our water system.
- Sweep driveways and patios clean instead of hosing down with water.
- Do not dispose of medication or prescription pharmaceuticals through our plumbing system or into our landfills. Medications directly impact wildlife and water treatment plants do not have the technology to properly neutralize these substances. Unused medications should be returned to the pharmacy.

### IN YOUR YARD

- Plant trees, shrubs and ground covers that can filter pollutants and reduce storm water runoff.
- Protect and care for established trees in your yard and neighbourhood.
- Install a rain barrel or French drain which helps direct water into your garden and water table and away from storm sewers. Better yet, consider retrofitting your home with a rain harvesting system which catches rain from roof and gutters, transports the water through piping and cleans water for future intended use.
- Avoid all chemical pesticides and herbicides.
- Use natural fertilizers such as blood and bone meal, compost and manure in limited quantities.
- Don't cut your grass too short. Adjust your lawnmower to 3" to reduce runoff from lawns and keep your grass healthier.
- Plant native vegetation and choose species that require little fertilizer and watering.
- If you do water your garden, make sure water doesn't wash over streets and sidewalks.

- Set out yard debris for municipal yard waste collection, or use it to make compost and mulch to hold moisture in the soil and control weeds.
- Decrease impervious surfaces around your home by adding more landscaping or by replacing asphalt with porous pavers such as interlocking bricks.
- Maintain septic systems on an annual basis.
- Do not bury garbage on your property. What you bury can negatively impact groundwater and will eventually make its way into streams, rivers, ponds or lakes.
- Consider using sand or less harmful de-icers in place of salt for traction in winter.
- It is unlawful to drain salt water from pools into a storm sewer. It must be drained to a sanitary sewer. Chlorine pools must be dechlorinated before draining. Abide by your municipal bylaws.

#### YOUR CAR

- Drive your car less so that less tire dust enters our waterways.
- Keep your vehicle well tuned and repaired to reduce automotive fluid leaks on roadways. If spills occur, clean up with sand, kitty litter, microbes or other eco friendly ways and dispose of clean up materials appropriately. Do your research!
- Take used motor oil to appropriate facilities.
- Don't wash your car at home and allow suds and cleaning chemicals to run into the ground, street or storm drain.
- Use a car wash that recycles wash water.
- Keep your tires properly inflated to minimize abrasion that contributes to air and water contamination by tire dust.

#### YOUR BOAT

- Don't dump garbage or sewage from your boat into the water. This is illegal.
- Bring all garbage and recyclables to land-based collection depots.
- Watch for fuel spills when you fill your tank. Take eco friendly remedial action to clean up spills and bilge water.
- Use oil absorbent materials to catch drips from the fuel intake and the vent overflow.
- Reduce your wake near the shoreline to minimize erosion.
- Use phosphate free cleaners bearing the EcoLogo to wash your boat.
- Use steel sinkers or washers instead of lead sinkers, which are harmful to waterfowl, when you go fishing.
- Keep your engine well tuned and make sure seals, gaskets and hoses don't leak.
- Don't dump bait or fish entrails into the water or on land.
- Wash your boat hull and equipment before moving to another water body to remove invasive species.

## LET'S ALL DO OUR PART TO KEEP OUR WATER CLEAN

When our water bubbles up from our marshes and wetlands that are the headwaters of our streams on the Oak Ridges Moraine it is relatively clean. It has been filtered by moraine sand and gravel and wetland vegetation. It is not so clean when it reaches the intake pipes for our drinking water supply, requiring extensive treatment. It takes little effort to do our part to keep our water clean and our ecosystems healthy.

