

## The Connection to Water Quality

Pet waste left in our yards comes into contact with storm water when it rains. The storm water becomes

contaminated from contact with pet waste and carries pollutants into the storm sewer system. The storm sewers quickly drain the water directly to our area streams without any treatment.



### Facts About Pet Waste

Dogs are major contributors to pet waste in our environment. However, all pets can contribute to the problem. The estimated number of dogs and cats in the St. Louis Area is approximately 700,000. The amount of feces produced by these pets is estimated to be equivalent to the sewage produced by a large municipality. Studies from other cities indicate that one third of people that walk their dogs do not pick up after their dog.

### Pollutants Associated With Pet Waste

**Fecal coliform** – One gram of dog feces contains 23 million fecal coliform bacteria.

**Oxygen demand** - As waste decays, it uses up the oxygen in the water that fish need.

**Nutrients** - Ammonia and nitrogen in the waste promotes unhealthy algae growth.

This brochure is sponsored by St. Louis County government, 59 municipalities, and the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District to advance the goals of the Phase II Storm Water Management Plan developed for St. Louis County.



For more information about pet waste and its impact on the environment, you can visit the following web sites:

#### USEPA

[http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/menuofbmps/poll\\_3.cfm](http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/menuofbmps/poll_3.cfm)

or

<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/protect/pdfs/petwaste.pdf>

#### Storm Water Manager's Resource Center

[http://www.stormwatercenter.net/Pollution\\_Prevention\\_Factsheets/AnimalWasteCollection.htm](http://www.stormwatercenter.net/Pollution_Prevention_Factsheets/AnimalWasteCollection.htm)

#### MARC

<http://www.marc.org/water/summer.htm>  
or you can contact:



MSD-Division of Environmental Compliance  
(314) 436-8712

# Pet Waste



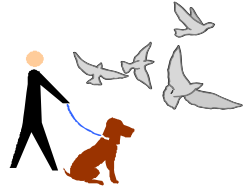
Help Protect Water Quality in St. Louis



## Is There A Problem With Pet Waste?

Water quality samples in St. Louis area streams have elevated fecal coliform levels in 100% of wet weather first flush samples from all watersheds.

### Significant Sources of Fecal Coliform



- Pets
- Humans
- Wildlife

Studies by USGS and those cited by USEPA confirm that nonhuman sources are a significant source of fecal coliform in urban storm water.

### Health Risks

Dog and cat feces must be handled carefully because it contains bacteria, viruses and parasites that can infect humans and cause serious illness. The pathogens in pet waste include: Campylobacteriosis, Cryptosporidium, Giardia lamblia, Salmonella, Toxocariasis, and Toxoplasmosis.

**Always** wash your hands after handling pet waste. Do not place pet waste in compost piles or around vegetable gardens where pathogens can contaminate food products.



## What Is The Solution?

### Pet Owners

Acceptable pet waste management options for pet owners includes:

- Put waste in a sealed bag and place in the trash.
- Flush down the toilet. (Do not flush plastic bags or kitty litter.)
- Bury waste in the soil at least 6 inches deep. (Do not bury in the garden.)
- Minimize pollution by having pets defecate in tall grass (>4 inches) located away from storm inlets, which acts as a filter and allows for natural decomposition.

### Comply with City Ordinances

Many cities have ordinances and post signs requiring the clean up of pet waste. Please be an advocate to encourage additional cities to take action.



### Sewer System Improvements

MSD is working hard to provide sewer service and storm water management to protect the public's health and safety.

- MSD has a major 20-year capital improvement program to address wet weather overflows, and improve storm water management.
- MSD is enhancing efforts to identify and eliminate illicit connections and illegal discharges of wastewater to the storm water system.
- MSD is committed to educating the public on ways to improve water quality.

As an individual you are being asked to join us in this effort and pledge to responsibly take care of your pets' waste. We urge you to sign the Pet Waste Pledge Card below to demonstrate your commitment.

#### **Pet Waste Pledge Card**

I pledge to do my part to protect water quality in St. Louis by:

- Picking up after my pet.
- Properly dispose of pet waste in the trash, toilet or by burying.
- Encouraging others in my community to do the same.

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Signed