



Say
"YES"
To A
Cleaner Paint
Creek

Pollution, Pollution, Pollution

Pollution can enter local streams from many sources. Government agencies are able to identify and control pollutants that enter waterways from factories and other industrial businesses, but we as everyday people need to deal with the pollution that enters streams from sources that are not so obvious or traceable. This type of pollution is called non-point source pollution and can include a variety of pollutants such as:

- Abandoned mine drainage;
- Illegal dumping of grease, oil, and toxic chemicals;
- Litter and pet waste;
- Runoff of fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides, and road salts; and
- Sedimentation from eroding stream banks that lack necessary vegetation for stabilization.

Often, this pollution is difficult to assess since it has so many different factors contributing to its cause. For this reason, non-point source pollution is the main problem with water quality in Pennsylvania.

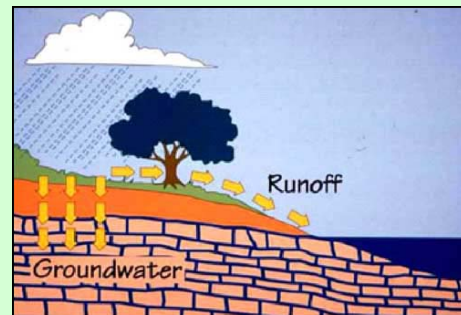


Photo:
Malcolm
Crittenden

Little Paint
Creek Falls

How Does Pollution Impact Area Waterways?

When rain falls over the land, pollutants are washed into the nearby streams, rivers, and lakes. These pollutants degrade water quality by increasing harmful metals and chemicals, lowering oxygen levels, and



destroying aquatic habitat, among other things. This is bad news for aquatic plants, bugs, and fish! Many fish and aquatic bugs have a low tolerance for large amounts of pollution. In addition, gill-breathing critters depend on high levels of oxygen in the water to live. Beyond the adverse affects pollution has on aquatic life, it can also impact our own drinking water by contaminating it with disease-causing germs that may bypass water purification systems! By taking a proactive approach in protecting our waterways, we can reduce the cost of treating our drinking water, which means lower water bills for residents in the area. For these reasons, we as a community must reduce pollution entering our area streams.

How Can You Help?

Everyone is responsible for contributing to water pollution, even though we may not realize it. Everyday human activities, like driving a car, can contribute to pollution. We may not be able to totally eliminate pollution, but we can take steps in our communities to reduce it. Here are a few ways you can help:

- Apply lawn and garden chemicals and sidewalk salt sparingly;
- Control soil erosion by volunteering in streamside tree plantings and not mowing to the edge of streams;
- Dispose of used antifreeze, oil, paints, and other household chemicals properly, not in storm sewers or drains;
- Dedicate an afternoon to picking up litter along a stream or road side;
- Keep litter, pet waste, and debris out of street gutters and storm drains because these drain directly into local waterways; and
- Reduce runoff by planting a rain garden in your yard!



Photo:
Natural
Biodiversity

Photo:
Tom Clark



Paint
Creek
as it
meets with
the
Stonycreek
River. Notice the
McNally Bridge in the
background.

Get Involved

Please take a proactive approach to conserving your watershed by joining the Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association. They welcome new members and volunteers.

JOIN PCRWA !

Meetings are held at 6:00 pm
on the third Monday of each
month in the
Windber Borough Building
1409 Somerset Avenue
Windber, PA 15963

Call 814-467-9014
for more information!



Please visit us on the web at www.kcstreamteam.org or
www.myspace.com/kcstreamteam for more information on
our conservation activities in the Kiski-Conemaugh River Basin.



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For more information on pollution and how you can help, please visit the Environmental Protection Agency website at www.epa.gov.
(Information obtained from the Environmental Protection Agency.)