



You, Me, and Watersheds!

Have you ever wondered where rainwater or snow melt goes once it hits the ground? How does it eventually make its way to the Kansas and Missouri Rivers? The answer is watersheds!

A watershed is an area of land that drains to a common body of water, such as a nearby creek, stream, river, or lake. **We all live in watersheds**, whose waters connect our communities across city, county, and state lines. Our local decisions impact our upstream and downstream neighbors, which means that our communities must work together to address issues like flooding and water quality.

Rainwater runs off rooftops, down streets, and across parking lots and yards, picking up substances along the way. This stormwater runoff can contain things like chemical fertilizers, pet waste, litter, cigarette butts, automotive fluids, and yard waste. This runoff washes down storm drains into local rivers and streams, untreated, where it can cause pollution that endangers public health and wildlife.

All of this may sound scary, but there are many ways to help prevent this from happening. Here are some simple things YOU can do to help reduce harmful stormwater runoff and **keep our watersheds clean**:

1. Landscape with native plants to increase water absorption and decrease lawn maintenance.
2. Never throw your trash or yard waste down storm drains or into the street.
3. Pick up pet waste and discard it in a waste receptacle.
4. Use lawn chemicals safely. Always follow the instructions on the label and never apply before a rainstorm or watering your lawn unless directed.
5. Use compost to improve soil structure and add nutrients.
6. Redirect the gutter downspouts on your home to drain onto lawns and gardens.
7. Wash your car at the car wash or in a grassy area at home. Do not wash vehicles on driveways or in the street.
8. Use rain barrels or rain gardens to keep rainwater on your property.

Knowing our watersheds helps remind us that our actions can impact – for better or for worse – all of the streams and rivers in our region.

For more information on watersheds, and where your water goes, visit the Stormwater Quality Programs webpage at wycokck.org/stormwater or dial 3-1-1 to one of Public Works' stormwater professionals.



WATERSHEDS

OF WYANDOTTE COUNTY

