

Stormwater Frequently Asked Questions

What is Stormwater?

Stormwater is the flow of water that results from precipitation and which occurs immediately following rainfall or as a result of snowmelt. When a rainfall event occurs, several things can happen to the precipitation. Some of the precipitation infiltrates into the soil surface, some is taken up by plants, and some is evaporated into the atmosphere. Stormwater is the rest of the precipitation that runs off land surfaces and impervious areas.

How is stormwater polluted?

Storm water runoff accumulates pollutants such as sediment, oil and grease, chemicals, nutrients, metals, and bacteria as it travels across land. Heavy precipitation or snowmelt can also cause sewer overflows that may contaminate water sources with untreated human and industrial waste, toxic materials, and other debris.

What is the #1 source of stormwater pollution?

Sediment is often viewed as the largest pollutant load associated with stormwater runoff in an urban setting. The loadings have been shown to be exceptionally high in the case of construction activity. Sediment is associated with numerous impacts in surface waters including increased turbidity, effects on aquatic and benthic habitat and reduction in capacity of impoundments. A number of other pollutants often attach to, and are carried by, sediment particles.

How do nutrients such as Nitrogen get into stormwater?

Nutrients enter stormwater in a variety of ways, including landscaping practices (commercial and home), leaks from sanitary sewers and septic systems, and animal wastes. The air we breath is also made up of mostly Nitrogen which then gets brought down to the ground when it rains.

Why are ponds required for new development?

Environmental regulations require that new development treat the stormwater from the development so that it is no more polluted after development than before. The ponds are one of the types of treatment for stormwater.

Doesn't stormwater get treated at the waste water treatment plant?

NO. Unlike sinks, showers, and toilets, when anything goes down a storm drain it goes directly to the nearest stream, lake, or river. Any pollution that is in that stormwater or dumped down the drain will end up in our waterbodies untreated.

Are there any jobs available in stormwater?

The stormwater field is an expanding career opportunity as environmental regulations get stricter. There are opportunities for new ideas and concepts that could make a large impact on the environment and development. The City of Wilson posts all available jobs online.