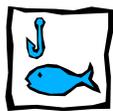


10 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO IMPROVE STORM WATER QUALITY IN WEST GREENWICH

There are many streams and rivers that flow through our backyards and drain into ponds, lakes, and ultimately the ocean. Pollutants such as fertilizer, animal feces, oil, hazardous waste, and road sand on the land can be washed into our waters, but we can reduce this type of pollution. Here is a list of 10 things you can do to help clean our local waterways.



1. Learn about your local waters and the animals and plants that live in your watershed. Everyone lives in a watershed, which is the drainage area to a local waterbody. West Greenwich is comprised of two main watersheds: the Pawtuxet River watershed and the Pawcatuck River watershed. Check out these watershed associations' websites to learn more and to find out how you can get involved! <http://www.wpwa.org/> and <http://www.pawtuxet.org/river.html>



2. Don't feed ducks! Although you may enjoy feeding geese, ducks, gulls and other waterfowl, remember that they too contribute to the same type of pollution

that limits swimming and fishing. One bird dropping can contaminate 10,000 gallons of water. Bread and other human food are bad for birds' digestive tracts too. Feeding waterfowl can also attract larger bird populations and may cause some birds to stop migrating.



3. Pick up after your pets. Pet waste pollutes local waterways and are greater polluters than you may think. This type of pollution contributes to the closing of swimming ponds and fishing areas all over the state. Pick up your pet's waste and deposit it in a trash can. See Scoop the Poop at www.ristormwatersolutions.org



4. Avoid over-fertilizing your lawn. During rain storms, **nutrients** from lawn fertilizer can be washed off lawns and paved areas into local waters. This type of pollution contributes to **eutrophication**, a process that causes nuisance algal blooms and reduction of habitat and oxygen levels for many aquatic organisms. This leads to a decline in fish in our waters. Get your soil tested to see if it really needs more fertilizer and if so, use as little as necessary. Also, reduce your lawn area by planting native, more drought-tolerant plants that are better adapted for the environment, and can act as buffers to prevent runoff from your lawn. For more information and fact sheets, log onto the **University of RI Cooperative Extension Home*A*Syst** website at www.uri.edu/ce/wq.



5. Minimize the use of hazardous products and **recycle** as much as possible. Cleaning and other household products can contain hazardous chemicals. Try to use the least harmful products available. Learn how to dispose of household hazardous chemicals properly by calling the **RI Resource Recovery program** at **942-1430 x 241** or visit them online at www.rirrc.org. Recycling helps to conserve natural resources and reduces the amount of refuse sent to landfills. Start a **compost** bin and buy products made with or packaged in recycled material to reduce waste further. Bring your used motor oil to the town transfer station for recycling. Consult your Town Planner for recycling guidelines.



6. Inspect septic systems. The entire town relies on some form of septic system for sewage disposal. Failing septic systems or cesspools are a major source of pollution to ground water and local reservoirs. If you have a septic system inspect it regularly, pump and repair it as needed. If you have a cesspool, replace it. For more information on maintaining a healthy septic system the **Septic System Checkup Handbook** is available online at www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/regs/regs/water/isdsbook.pdf or call for a copy at 222-6822.



7. Get involved. Volunteer.

Help with the WG Conservation Commission's clean-up efforts or be a local volunteer water monitor. To find out more about becoming a volunteer water monitor visit URI's Watershed Watch at www.uri.edu/ce/wq/. Participate in other local activities and organizations that benefit the environment, such as the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association or the Pawtuxet River Watershed Council. In West Greenwich, you can join the **Lake Mishnock Preservation Association!** www.lakemishnock.org Statewide non-profit organizations also need volunteers., such as Save the Bay at www.savebay.org. Every little bit you do counts! **Speak out.** Attend public meetings that pertain to storm water quality. Your participation is imperative if your local and state public servants are to help you make large-scale improvements in your watershed. If you see a problem in your area or want something done, say something! If you don't have time to attend meetings, call or contact your Town Planner, your town or state officials, or DEM.



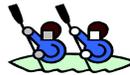
8. Conserve water.

Indoors and outside. Indoor conservation helps prevent septic system failures. Install a rain barrel to your downspout to save rainwater for outdoor watering. This helps save water in your well during the summer low water table season. To learn more about conserving water, visit the RI Water Resources Board at www.wrb.state.ri.us.



9. Care for your Car.

Leaking oil and other fluids from cars drip onto driveways and roads. Then the next time it rains, these hazardous pollutants are washed into our rivers and streams. Fix oil leaks and never dump oil, antifreeze or any other materials into the storm drains. When you wash your car on the driveway all the soap, dirt and oily grit run down the street into the storm drain and directly into the river. Wash your car on grass where water can infiltrate and receive some treatment in the soil. Better yet, take your car to a car wash where water gets treated and recycled.



10. Get out!

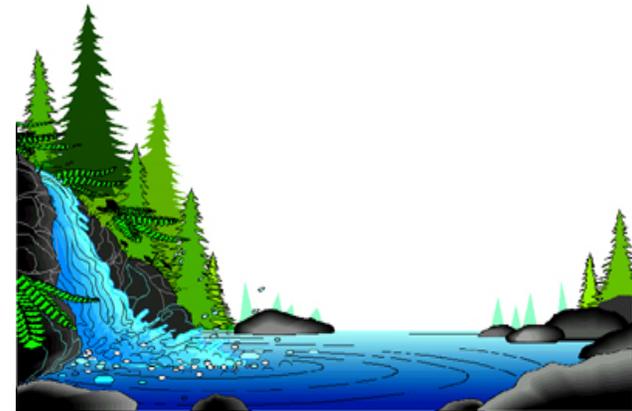
Get out on the water. Fish, swim, sail, kayak, boat, go birding or walk along one of the many rivers and streams. Visit Big River Reservoir, Arcadia Management Area, or any of the other natural attractions West Greenwich has to offer. Explore the waters near your home or visit other parts of the state. Make it a point to enjoy the benefits of living near water, and while you're out there, keep an eye out for problems or pollution sources. **To file an environmental complaint with DEM (which can be anonymous), call: 222-1360. Or call your Town Planner at 392-3800 x 111.**

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
Office of Water Resources
235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908-5767
Phone (401) 222-6800
www.dem.ri.gov

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SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP CLEAN



WEST GREENWICH WATERS