

The Industrial Revolution led to many advancements in America. Unfortunately, one of the "advancements" was an increase in the amount of pollutants released into the environment. It was not until the late-40s that enough awareness of how polluting our waters was affecting us and our environment that the government began to regulate water pollution. This was furthered in the 70s, with the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency. Also in the 70s came the Clean Water Act. This is the legislation currently being implemented to keep our waters clean and usable.

The EPA began the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System as the permitting process for the Clean Water Act. As our knowledge of how to prevent pollution has increased the permitting process has changed. The latest update to this process was to include many smaller cities, and other forms of local government. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the EPA made an agreement so that the TCEQ will take responsibility for the permitting process here in Texas. Under this permit, many of the cities in, as well as Denton County itself, will have to meet certain requirements or face the possibility of fines.

Denton County created a Storm Water Management Program in response to these regulations. It is a comprehensive program designed to address the requirements for meeting water quality standards. One of the first goals of the program is to increase public awareness about Storm Water Pollution, and ways to prevent pollution. Another goal of the program is to develop procedures for responding to citizen concerns related to Storm Water issues. By increasing awareness, it is hoped that the citizens of Denton County will assist the program by reporting potential violations.

Denton County Storm Water Management Program

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## *Denton County Storm Water Management Program Brochure*



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Have you ever driven down one of the beautiful country roads in the County and noticed a pile of trash lying there on the side? Have you wondered where that trash goes?



Denton County is one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. Preventing pollution is now more important than ever. The water supplies in our region will be places of recreation and sources of drinking water for even more people. Impaired waters will now have the opportunity to affect even more people.



Our lakes and streams are vital resources for our health. Water will continue to flow over the ground and into our lakes and streams. While we cannot prevent this from happening, we can all do our part to make sure the water reaching the lakes and streams is not contaminated. Preventing pollution is the easiest and most cost effective way treating pollution. Once the water becomes polluted, it becomes very expensive and difficult to remove the pollution.

Have you washed your car on your driveway or out in the street? Did you watch to see where the water went as it left your property? For the most part, these things eventually find their way into our lakes. They cause problems for the animals and plants that use the streams and lakes as a home, and they cause problems for us by creating recreation and health hazards.

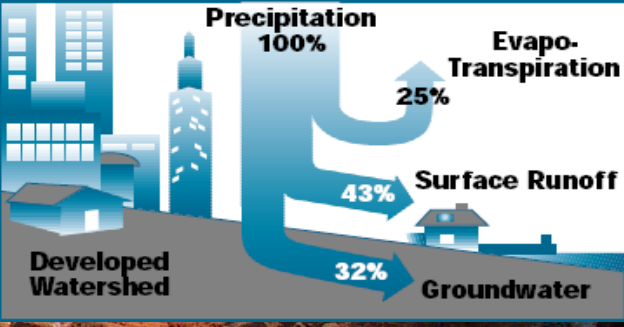
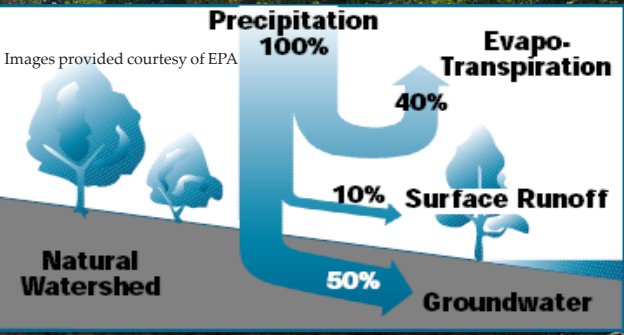


A watershed is a type of community. When it rains, whatever rainfall does not seep into the ground begins flowing over the ground on its way to a stream or lake. Watersheds are the area of land that drain to a single point. It is like a boundary that can be used to see where water flows from and to, everyone inside the boundary has the ability to affect the quality of the water. Four major watersheds cross the boundary of Denton County. Each major watershed is made of several sub-watersheds. Watersheds provide an easy way to visualize how we all share the same water. They are also useful for identifying improper practices upstream. The way sub-watersheds are connected, allow a problem to be traced upstream and the source of the problem can usually be identified.



So, what do these things have to do with Storm Water? When it rains, all of the stuff that has been dumped into stream beds, or down storm drains is suddenly picked up and taken down stream. At the end of every stream and river in this area is a lake. People use the lakes for recreation, fishing and for drinking water. So, the stuff that gets into the streams finds its way into water that people use.

Denton County is comprised of two basic types of watersheds. During a storm, they each pose threats to the health of our water systems in different ways. Natural watersheds are characterized by sparsely populated areas. These houses usually have some sort of septic system, and their own water supply. Also, there are generally several farms spread throughout the watershed. As the water from a storm flows over the surface, it dissolves many of the substances (i.e. fertilizers, pesticides, and animal waste) it contacts, taking them below the surface into groundwater reservoirs or over the surface and into a stream.



A developed watershed has more developed, urban areas. They produce more runoff because of the increase in surfaces that do not allow the water to seep into the soil. These same surfaces allow water to move at a faster rate over the ground. This increases the chances for flash floods, and erosion problems. The typical pollutants from these watersheds are lawn chemicals, petroleum products, and sediments. Denton County is currently going through a lot of urbanization, so these pollutants pose a real risk to the health of our water resources, and the health and happiness of a lot of people living in the area.