

What's with USU's new signs and why are they in the gutters?

When it rains or snows over a natural landscape, most of the water soaks into the ground. In urban areas, the pavement, buildings, and other "impervious surfaces" prevent this natural process from happening. Urban stormwater travelling over hard surfaces collects a toxic mix of pollutants along the way. This runoff eventually collects in gutters or ditches and is transported to storm drains.



Many people think the water in Logan's storm drains goes to a treatment plant. In reality, much of this polluted water flows untreated to the Logan River, the Bear River and to Cutler Reservoir where it can harm the plants and animals who call these water bodies home. On USU's campus the rest of the stormwater is collected in dry wells called "sumps" where it eventually soaks into our groundwater, taking with it pollutants that can reduce the quality of our drinking water.

The new signs around campus are to remind us all to be careful about what goes these drains. Remember, if you wouldn't drink it, don't dump it!

What's the problem?

Oil, antifreeze, cleaners, paint thinner, pesticides, health care and beauty products are among the common products we use every day that are toxic to fish, frogs and other aquatic animals. Small amounts of these substances can have a



huge impact on local water quality. In fact, 1 quart of used oil can contaminate 250,000 gallons of water!

Grass clippings, leaves, soil and other yard waste that wash into storm drains will decompose in the water. This process can deprive fish and other aquatic animals of the oxygen they need to live.

Fertilizers or soap that washes into storm drains can over-fertilize aquatic plants, resulting in toxins that are poisonous to our pets and livestock.

Pet and other animal waste contaminate water with disease-causing germs.





What can we do?

We can all help in reducing stormwater pollution. In addition to raising awareness for water quality issues, here are some ways in which each of us can help:

- Dispose of all hazardous wastes at approved hazardous waste facility. NOTE: Dumping these materials down a toilet or household drain is not a good alternative, since these materials can damage septic systems or harm your community wastewater treatment plant.
- Never wash grass clippings, leaves, soil or other organic materials into the gutter or a ditch. Use a rake or a broom to collect the materials (and get some great exercise). Compost yard waste to create a high quality (and free) garden supplement, or recycle these materials at your local landfill. Most towns have Green Waste pick up which makes this an easy process.
- Wash cars on lawns where the water will be absorbed or use a commercial car wash. Sweep up fertilizer that spills onto sidewalks or driveways.
- Scoop the Poop! Deposit animal waste in a trash bin for transport to a landfill.

Help protect our water, the animals that live in our water and our own health.

Only Rain in the Storm Drain!!!

For more information visit:

*Urban Stormwater: [http://extension.usu.edu/
waterquality/htm/urbanstormwater](http://extension.usu.edu/waterquality/htm/urbanstormwater)

*Stencils: <http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/npdes/swbmp/Storm-Drain-Marking.cfm>

*Logan City
Stormwater: http://www.loganutah.org/PW/storm_water/index.cfm#tab1

*Hazardous Waste
Disposal: <http://www.loganutah.org/Environmental/Facilities/#tab7>

