



Huron River Watershed Council

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Pet Waste Facts

H2O Heroes Scoop Poop In March

The Huron River Watershed Council along with several Huron River communities are protecting water quality by promoting March as Scoop Poop month.

Why is poop a problem?

There are over 50,000 dogs in Washtenaw County; their waste is not suitable for compost or fertilizer. It can carry diseases and bacteria, which are unsafe for humans. When it rains, bacteria from pet waste can wash directly into storm drains and drainage ditches and eventually into our waterways . . . untreated.

H2O Heroes Scoop Poop Goals

- Fight the spread of diseases and unsafe bacteria
- Stop SIP (step in poop) occurrences
- Increase public awareness
- Protect water quality
- Encourage proper disposal of pet meds
- Encourage proper disposal of pet "sharps"
- Increase awareness about dontflushdrugs.com
- Identify and recognize H2O Heroes

Another problem with poop.

Animal waste contains nutrients that encourage excess weed and algae growth like the regular algae blooms you see in Gallup Pond or Ford Lake. When pet waste is washed into our lakes and streams, it decays, using up oxygen and sometimes releasing ammonia. Low oxygen levels and ammonia combined with warm temperatures can kill fish and other aquatic life.



Do your part. Be an H2O Hero.

On a walk, picking up after your pet every time ensures that waste will not wash into storm water drains and eventually into the river. So when nature calls, do the right thing. Always carry a plastic bag with you. Although some parks and beaches provide plastic bags, don't assume you will find a public dispenser. Plastic grocery and vegetable bags work well. Place your hand in the bag, pick up the waste. Turn the bag inside out, and then drop it in the trash.

Is there an H2O Hero behind every dog?

Several surveys indicate that 60-70% of dog owners clean up after their dogs most or all of the time, leaving 30-40% of pet owners who rarely or never do.*

What about kitty litter?

Kitty litter dumped outside can be washed into streams. Bag it, or double bag it and pitch it in the trash.

Can I flush poop?

Sure you can. If you want to bring pet waste indoors and flush it (un-bagged) down the toilet, it will be subject to the same filtering and treatment as human wastewater. Note that new flushable poop bags are now on the market.

Don't Flush Drugs?

Increasing amounts of prescription drugs are being detected in our rivers. Through the Washtenaw County Pharmaceutical Take Back Program, pet owners can dispose of unwanted pet medications. Washtenaw County residents are encouraged to take their old and unwanted medications to a pharmacy to be properly disposed – for FREE. Go to www.dontflushdrugs.com for details.



Sharps Pointers

Improperly discarded sharps, needles and syringes, can injure family members, waste and recycling workers, or end up in places where they are a danger to the public, such as beaches. Washtenaw County's Department of Environmental Health encourages the purchase of a sharps container whenever sharps are purchased. When filled, these puncture resistant containers can be sealed shut and taken to a participating pharmacy, clinic or Home Toxics Collection Center. Go to www.dontflushdrugs.com for details.



Pet Waste Facts

Dispelling some myths . . .

Myth 1: Runoff from streets and storm drains is treated at wastewater treatment plants.

FACT: Storm drain runoff in Washtenaw County is not treated and runs directly into our creeks and streams. That is why it is important to insure that pollutants such as animal waste, automotive fluids, garbage and chemicals do not end up in storm drains.

Myth 2: Most creek pollution comes from a few big polluters.

FACT: Not so. In fact, today 75% of the pollution entering our rivers, streams and lakes arrives with the rainwater that runs off hard surfaces such as roads, parking lots, and rooftops. The polluting culprits are dirt, oil, toxic auto fluids, pesticides and fertilizer, and bacteria from pet waste and failing septic systems.

Myth 3: The impact of one household doesn't really matter.


FACT: Although an individual home might contribute only minor amounts of pollution, the combined effect of an entire neighborhood or city is serious. Clean water is important to all of us. Clean water starts with you.

Myth 4: Creek contamination and beach postings are usually caused by chemical pollution such as paints, solvents, and motor oils.

FACT: Chemical contamination is always a concern. Yet, bacterial contamination from animal waste, litter, leaking septic tanks, garbage, and green waste also threaten creeks, beaches, wildlife and your health. Beach postings are actually triggered by bacterial contamination.



Why do h2o heroes scoop poop?



TO:

- Fight the spread of unsafe diseases and bacteria
- Stop SIP (step in poop) occurrences
- Earn their dog's undying affection
- Protect water quality
- All of the above

H2O Heroes know that when pet waste is left behind, it washes into stormdrains and ditches. From there, it heads straight to our local rivers, lakes and streams. No filters, no cleansing.

Be an H2O Hero and your dog's best friend: SCOOP IT, BAG IT, AND PITCH IT IN THE TRASH!

h2o heroes
Huron River Watershed Council

Learn more at www.hrwc.org/h2oheroes.

So, what is an H2O Hero?

An H2O Hero is someone who is protecting water quality in their everyday actions. When you help protect the Huron River and its tributary streams, lakes, wetlands and groundwater with simple steps taken right in your own home or backyard, you are an H2O Hero. H2O Heroes do things like pick up and dispose of pet waste in the trash, sweep fertilizer spills off sidewalks and driveways, choose phosphorus free turf fertilizer, plant deep rooted native plants that help capture and infiltrate runoff, and save water to save energy.

Do you know an H2O Hero?

Perhaps someone in your office has devised a clever way to pick up pet waste? Maybe a customer has shared a tip with you about nighttime waste collection? We want to know about them. In March, we will send you an award template so that you can recognize the H2O Heroes you know; celebrate their everyday actions on your bulletin board or website and share them with your social network. Please share your stories with us too, so that we may add ideas and stories to our website.

Contact

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Resources/Credits

*Hardwick, N (1997), from McKenzie-Mohr & Associates Reducing Pet Waste report to SFWMD

*Washtenaw County Department of Environmental Health

*EPA Nonpoint Source Toolbox; myths credit to City of Santa Barbara