Hopewell Township Environmental Newsletter

A Publication of the Environmental Commission

Environmental Commission Members

Jerry Lewis - Chair
Jane Hankins - Vice Chair
Beth McClain - Secretary
Ken Strait - Liaison to Land Use Board
Burt Doremus
Marion Carll
Cheryl Lalancette

Meetings

The Hopewell Township Environmental Commission meets the second Wednesday of each month @ 7 PM except for November and December when meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month. The meetings are open to the public and all are welcome to attend.

Newsletters are available on the township website and the township Facebook page. Printed copies available in the municipal building.

For more information on Stormwater runoff visit :

www.nj.gov/dep/stormwater

www.njclean.org/stormwater-management

https://njstormwatermatters.com

Storm Water Run-Off

What is it?

Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation from rain or snowmelt flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent stormwater from naturally soaking into the ground. Stormwater runoff is one of the fastest growing sources of pollution. When rain hits rooftops, parking lots, and roads instead of wetlands, forests, and grasslands, it tends to run into storm drains that are directly connected to our waterways.

Why is that important?

Stormwater runoff brings two problems to local streams and rivers. First, the high volume of water carries a lot of energy that can erode stream banks and bottoms, destroying habitat. Second, the water picks up all manner of filth from our hard surfaces through storm drains, and carries it to our rivers and lakes. Contaminants such as motor oil, antifreeze, and fertilizers flow into the streams and creeks. Pesticides, fertilizers, animal waste are pollutants that can originate from lawns and non-point pollution sources. All of this runoff contaminates rivers, lakes, streams and other bodies of water often killing aquatic plants and animals. In areas where storms have gotten significantly wetter and more frequent we need to find solutions to the problems created by stormwater run off.

What's being done?.

Water is a non-renewable degradable resource. We must treat it very carefully. Stormwater — precipitation from rain and snow — is our major source of water. Stormwater management is important since it critically affects our water quality and supply, as well as recreational activities like swimming and fishing and a broad range of ecological areas. Only about one percent of the water on earth is fresh water and available to support life. There is no new natural source — fresh water is constantly recycled.

How we use land directly affects the way stormwater flows, its total amount of run-off (volume) and its increased speed (rate) in reaching our waterways. Under undisturbed conditions, over half of precipitation infiltrates the soil and only about ten percent runs off the surface. The infiltrated water both recharges underground aquifers and slowly enters streams, maintaining their flow during dry weather. Natural vegetation acts like a sponge, a filter, and a water recycling system, it allows precipitation to slowly infiltrate into the soil; slows the flow of run-off; filters and treats the run-off; and recycles a portion of the precipitation to the atmosphere through evapotranspiration.

Runoff water from storms needs to be clean of debris and pollutants so that drinking water and waterways are clean for all. This can be achieved by appropriate Stormwater Management. In March 2020, The Department of Environmental Protection formally adopted groundbreaking amendments to the state's stormwater management rules to better protect water quality by reducing polluted runoff through implementation of required green infrastructure technologies for major developments. As of March 2021 municipalities had to adopt new stormwater management ordinances to incorporate these changes.

How Can You Help?

There are many different things you can do to manage stormwater on your property including:

Downspout redirect - look for ways to direct them to the lawn and garden areas

Rain Barrels - capture and hold water to be released into planted areas

- Plant trees - tree roots help hold soil and slow the rate of water released
- Rain Gardens - capture water and release it slowly into the soil
- Pervious Pavers - provide space for water to be stored until it soaks in to the ground
- Reduce Lawn - create areas for native trees, shrubs, and ground cover which soak up to 14 times more rainwater than lawns
- Check with your local municipality for ideas

Thanks to ANJEC for Stormwater info *@www.anjec.org* Check their website for more information.