



THE SURPRISING STORY OF STORMWATER PRESENTATION

for students

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All cities and towns have to deal with what we call **stormwater**. Stormwater is the water you see rushing down your streets, sidewalks, driveways, and yards after a storm. It could be from an afternoon thunderstorm...or days of on-and-off drizzle.

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It could be from warm weather after a snowfall that melts snow and ice. Some places – like much of Pennsylvania and other parts of the East Coast –experience stormwater all year round. In the winter, there's snow and ice that fall, freeze and melt in a constant cycle. In the summer, there are big storms. In the fall and winter, rainy weather comes and goes. Other places – like Southern California – only see rain during certain times of the year. Since months go by without any rain, that first rainfall every year can make a big splash!

Not matter where you live, all that water is a big deal. In order to prevent problems – like flooding – cities and towns must deal with the stormwater. And make no doubt about it – you're an important player in all of that.

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Did you know that the water you use today is the same water the dinosaurs were drinking millions of years ago? That's right – when you think about it – water is OLD...

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And ... there's only so much water on planet Earth. Our water gets recycled through the water cycle (through Earth's atmosphere – hydrologic cycle).

It evaporates into the sky, condenses to form clouds, and returns as rain, snow and other forms of participation. Back on the ground, water becomes runoff that flows over and through the ground to get back to large bodies of water – like the Susquehanna River.

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So....there will never be any new water on Earth!

The same old water keeps cycling through Earth's natural systems.

Everyone ... everything needs water to survive.

That means it's **everyone's job** to help keep it clean for the next generation!

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At Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority, we're responsible for treating wastewater, which is water that comes from sinks, when you turn the faucet on, from showers and toilets – all of that is filtered through pipes that reach our plant in Hanover Twp., where we treat the water. But we're also responsible for managing that stormwater – the precipitation you see here falling on homes and pavements and that eventually makes its way into drains and ditches in your neighborhood. Underneath is a system of pipes and drains used to carry stormwater away from streets and towns to prevent flooding.

When precipitation or rain falls to the ground, it flows over land back to water bodies. It can also soak into the ground and refill underground sources of water. On the left – here's where you see the stormwater and other runoff that enters our storm drains and waterways untreated.

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But happens when trash and other debris pile up in drains and pipes? As you see here...trash and litter are washed down the drain, then make their way to nearby creeks and rivers and eventually into oceans and bays, (here – we're focused on the Chesapeake Bay). While that trash is traveling, look who it's meeting up with...aquatic life like fish, lobsters and oysters, wildlife we count on for food. How many of us here think you'd be healthy eating garbage for lunch?

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First and foremost – only rain down the drain.

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So how can you help? Pick up trash...place trash like straws, leaves and cans in the garbage.

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As we'd seen before, when heavy rain and snowmelt occur, it can pick up trash and carry it away to our local waterways.

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Even activities like car washing can affect our environment. When your parents or siblings or neighbors are washing a car in the driveway, where do you think that dirty water with detergents and contaminants is going?

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Right here ... REMEMBER – ONLY RAIN DOWN THE STORM DRAIN.

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And when they do that – it's like washing the car right in the lake or the ocean...where the animals feed. Anyone know what they should do instead?

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Use a commercial car wash that treats or recycles its wastewater, or wash your car on your yard so the water infiltrates into the ground. Remember – Only Rain Down the Storm Drain!

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We all love our pets, but...for our environment's sake...it's important to clean up after pets so pet waste and harmful bacteria don't make it into our waterways. What we need to do is flush pet waste...or trash it, rather than leaving it in our yards or on pavements.

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Recycling – that's another important point to remember! Putting paper in the recycling bin and water bottles help keep reduce trash and pollutants from entering places they shouldn't be and consuming oxygen that plants and animals need to survive and thrive.

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Lastly...remember...

There's a limited supply of water on planet Earth.

So, let's Give a Hoot and Don't Pollute!

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