

Keep Pet Waste Out of Waterways

Owning a dog has shown to improve our health by providing companionship, encouraging exercise, and reducing high blood and stress. We take our dogs everywhere these days - cafés and restaurants, hiking trails, dog parks, or simply walking the streets. According to the American Pet Products Association there are 89.7 million dogs in the US. That's a lot of poop!

Unfortunately, dog waste can pollute rivers, streams, and lakes even if you don't live near a waterway. Stormwater runoff carries pet waste into drainage ditches and stormdrains where it is then dumped, untreated, into the nearest waterway. Dog waste contains bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can harm humans. When present in large quantities, pet waste can even make waterways unfit for human contact. Once in a waterway, pet waste can travel long distances and pollute a large area.

To help reduce pet waste pollution in our waterways:

- **Bag It & Trash It!** Use a plastic bag to remove the waste and dispose of it in the trash. That's a good use for leftover bread bags. They even make biodegradable bags.
- **Flush It!** Flush it down your toilet, but not the bag please.
- **Bury It!** Purchase an in ground pet waste digester for the backyard. Ask your local pet supplier where you can purchase one.
- **Don't Plant It!** Do NOT put cat or dog waste in to your composting bin or pile. It can leach bacteria, viruses, pathogens, and diseases into the soil.
- **Don't Dump It!** Do NOT put pet waste, or anything, in stormdrains.

We can all enjoy the company of our dog and keep the environment healthy if we remember to pick up after our pet. Reducing water pollution isn't just a one person task it's a community effort.