MSP

Michiana
Stormwater
Partnership

Got Clean Water?

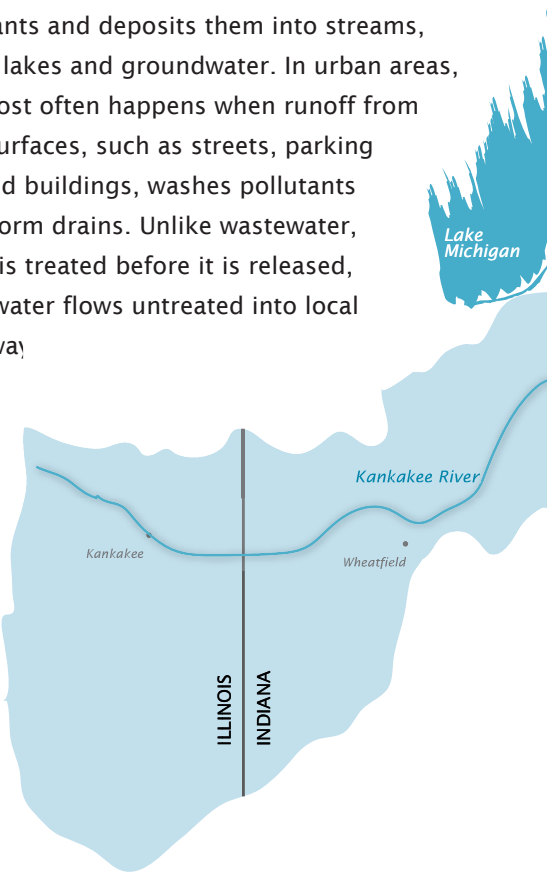
The Michiana Residential MS4 Initiative

Water

It's one of our most important natural resources and essential to sustain life. Pollution of our water supply causes devastating effects that threaten both public health and the environment.

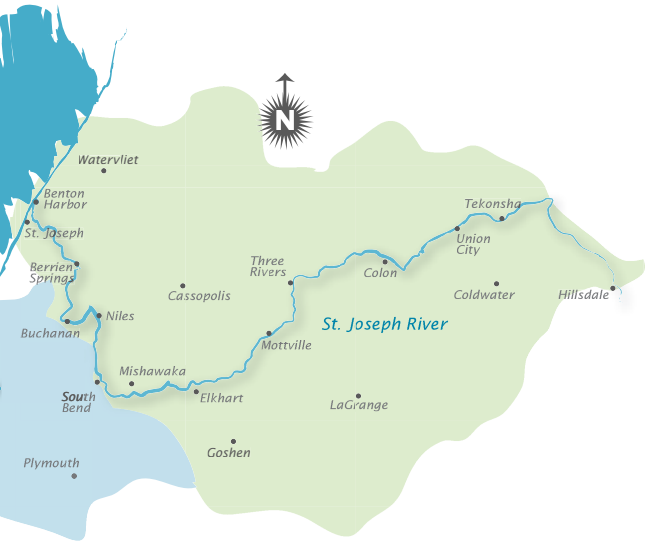
When we think of environmental pollution, we most often conjure up images of smoking factories, toxic waste dumps and oil spills. What we don't realize, however, is that the leading cause of water quality problems is from pollutants that don't originate from a single source or enter waterways at a particular site.

This type of widespread pollution, called *nonpoint source pollution,* occurs when rainfall, snowmelt or irrigation runs over land, picks up pollutants and deposits them into streams, rivers, lakes and groundwater. In urban areas, this most often happens when runoff from hard surfaces, such as streets, parking lots and buildings, washes pollutants into storm drains. Unlike wastewater, which is treated before it is released, stormwater flows untreated into local waterway



Water Quality and Our Water Resources

Water resources in the region provide a variety of opportunities, both recreational and as a scenic backdrop for our communities. Polluted runoff from municipalities, agriculture, forestry and construction causes physical changes to the river's channel, harms fish and wildlife populations, kills native vegetation, fouls drinking water supplies and can impair recreational uses.



www.michianastormwaterpartnership.org

Protection Under the Clean Water Act

The Clean Water Act, administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), was implemented to protect our nation's water supply. As part of this effort to protect and maintain water quality, the EPA established the **Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Program**, known as *MS4*.

The City of Mishawaka, the City of South Bend, St. Joseph County, the Town of Roseland, the Town of Osceola, St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District, St. Joseph River Basin Commission, Ivy Tech Community College and Bethel College — collectively known as the Michiana Stormwater Partnership (MSP) — have been designated MS4 entities and must comply with MS4 program requirements.

www.michianastormwater partnership.org

A Partnership is Created

The Michiana Stormwater Partnership formed to comply with MS4 regulations and educate those who live and work in the community about the harmful effects of stormwater pollution. Municipal and college officials are jointly working to address:

- Public education and outreach
- Public participation and involvement
- Illicit discharge detection and elimination
- Construction site runoff control
- Post-construction runoff control
- Pollution prevention and good housekeeping

Detailed information on each of these control measures is available at *www.michianastormwaterpartnership.org*.

You Can Make a Difference

Although individual homes might contribute only minor amounts of nonpoint source pollution, the combined effect of an entire neighborhood, let alone a city, can have serious consequences. You can help reduce the amount of pollutants that enter local waterways by following a few simple measures.

Properly Dispose of Household Hazardous Waste

The City of Mishawaka, in conjunction with St. Joseph County, operates a household hazardous waste disposal center facility located at 1105 E. Fifth St. It is open from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday and is open to all St. Joseph County residents. For more information, contact the Mishawaka Street Department at 574.258.1660 or e-mail *street@mishawakacity.com*.

Limit Use of Pesticides and Lawn Fertilizers

Follow manufacturer's direction when using chemicals and apply only the recommended amount. Don't spread chemicals on your lawn if a storm or heavy rain is forecast. Landscaping with disease- and pest-resistant plants can reduce the need for pesticides and fertilizers.

Practice Conservation in Landscaping and Lawn Care

Altering the natural contours of your yard during landscaping, and planting nonnative plants that need fertilizer and extra water can increase the potential for runoff and soil erosion. Grasses and natural groundcover can be attractive and practical substitutes for nonporous surfaces. Incorporating natural grasses, trees, wooden decks, crushed stone or brick paths, rain gardens and mulch into landscaping reduces runoff and prevents erosion by allowing rainwater to slowly seep into the ground. Additionally, don't rake leaves, grass clippings or litter into streets where they can enter storm drains or be washed into waterways.

Prevent Automobile Fluid Leakage

Have your vehicle serviced regularly to prevent problems that lead to leakage. Clean up any spilled brake fluid, oil, grease and antifreeze from garages, driveways and streets. Do not hose these fluids or any cleanup residue into the street. If you change your own oil, be careful to avoid spills and collect waste oil for recycling. Take your vehicle to a car wash to prevent soaps and waxes from being washed into the storm drain. Car washes send dirty water to the wastewater treatment plant. If you wash your vehicle at home, wash it on the lawn, not the driveway.

Dispose of Pet Waste

Pet waste is a significant source of bacteria and nutrients that lead to harmful algae and plant growth in waterways. Clean up pet waste in your yard or when walking your pet. The best way to dispose of pet waste is to bag it and place it in the trash.

Get Involved

You can help protect local waterways and keep Michiana a clean environment in which to live by volunteering for community projects.

- Participate in local meetings to help develop cleanup strategies.
- Volunteer for river and stream cleanup groups.
- Help restoration efforts by planting trees.

The Michiana Stormwater Partnership is implementing a number of measures to help prevent pollutants from entering storm drains. To find out more about the MSP's effort, visit our website.

www.michianastormwater partnership.org

Resources

For more information about nonpoint source pollution and how you can help prevent it, as well as community activities, contact the MSP.

Mishawaka Planning Department
574.258.1625
planning@mishawaka.in.gov
ms4coordinator@mishawaka.in.gov
www.mishawaka.in.gov

City of South Bend
574.235.5933
jengstro@southbendin.gov
www.southbendIn.gov

St. Joseph County
Town of Roseland
Town of Osceola
574.235.9626
mschaefer@co.st-joseph.in.us
www.stjosephcountyindiana.com

St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District
574.291.7444 x3
Andrew.Fox@in.nacdnet.net
www.stjosephswcd.org

St. Joseph River Basin Commission/MACOG
574.287.1829
kmackowiak@macog.com
www.sjrbc.com

Ivy Tech Community College
574.289.7001 x5426
dcraker@ivytech.edu
www.ivytech.edu

Bethel College Physical Plant
574.257.3346
yaws@BethelCollege.edu
www.BethelCollege.edu

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