



# 12 Things You Can Do to Clean Up Pennsylvania's Rivers & Streams

*You can help improve local and downstream waters by taking steps to prevent polluted runoff—and it all starts at home. Here are 12 ways you can help reduce pollution:*

- 1. Reduce or eliminate the use of fertilizers and chemical herbicides and pesticides.** Learn to live with a dandelion or two. Lawn fertilizers and chemicals are a big source of nitrogen and phosphorus pollution and toxic runoff. Visit [cbf.org/healthylawns](http://cbf.org/healthylawns) for more ideas.
- 2. Properly dispose of hazardous household items.** Oils, anti-freeze, paint, solvents, cleaners, preservatives, and prescription drugs should not be poured down a household or storm drain. Check with your county waste management service to find out what hazardous materials they accept.
- 3. Landscape with native plants.** Native grasses and other plants don't require the amount of watering or fertilizing necessary for non-natives. Consider involving and educating your community by using native plants and other Bay-friendly landscaping on community property near your home.
- 4. Plant a rain garden.** Rain gardens are planted in low-lying areas that typically receive a lot of runoff during storms. Planted with native species that can handle wet soil, these gardens help reduce flooding and erosion and filter polluted runoff. If you have a really wet area or one with heavy clay soil that drains slowly, you might want to consider a backyard wetland.
- 5. Install a rain barrel (or two).** Placed at the base of a downspout, a typical rainbarrel can hold 55-75 gallons of runoff from a rooftop, reducing flooding and erosion. They can be bought from garden supply centers or easily built.
- 6. Eliminate bare spots in your yard.** Bare spots are places where vegetation (such as plants, shrubs, grasses, flowers) no longer exists in the soil. The outcome of having any type of bare spot is the same: Rain hits the ground and is not able to soak in to the soil.
- 7. Make an appointment to service your septic system.** Septic systems should be inspected yearly to ensure proper functioning. Waste from failing systems can leak into the groundwater and eventually end up in local waterways and the Bay.
- 8. Resurface with permeable pavers.** Time to replace that crumbling driveway? Consider using permeable pavers that allow rain to soak into the ground and be filtered rather than flowing into the nearest storm drain.
- 9. Scoop the poop.** Make your neighbors happy and keep harmful nutrients and bacteria out of waterways by always cleaning up after your pet.
- 10. Don't litter.** Reduce the amount of trash that ends up in the Bay.
- 11. Participate in a CBF-led program.** Whether it's planting trees along a stream or a rain garden at your local high school, CBF has many ways for you to get involved. Check out [cbf.org/events](http://cbf.org/events) and sign-up for our action network and e-news.
- 12. Learn more.** To learn more about the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and things you can do, visit [cbf.org](http://cbf.org) or call our Pennsylvania office at 717/234-5550.

