



Stormwater Management Program News

Second Edition 2024

The City would like to thank those organizations which held clean up events this spring and those who participated.

Despite cold and rainy weather, twenty-three volunteers showed up to help the Cañon City Metro Rec District with their annual Clean Up Green Up riverwalk clean up event on April 27th. Due to the inclement weather, the volunteers concentrated on the area around Forest Island, removing a couple of truck loads of trash.



On Sunday, May 5th, Royal Gorge RIO held their annual Arkansas River clean up event. Volunteers rafted or walked the river, removing nearly 900 pounds of trash and debris from the river and its banks!



Thank you to the Rec District, Royal Gorge RIO and all the volunteers who helped clean up our river! Fantastic job by all!



City of Cañon City

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ILICIT DISCHARGES

What is an illicit discharge?

Technically, anything other than stormwater entering our storm sewer system is considered an illicit discharge. The storm sewer system includes City streets, curb and gutter, and drainages, as well as storm inlets and pipes.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) does allow some discharges to not be enforced against. These include, but are not limited to:

- Irrigation and lawn watering flows
- Streams, springs and groundwater flow
- Uncontaminated pumped groundwater and crawl space dewatering
- Footing and foundation drains and air conditioning condensation
- Water line flushing
- Residential car washing
- Dechlorinated swimming pool water
- Water from street sweeping
- Agricultural stormwater
- Water from emergency fire-fighting.

Why should we care about illicit discharges?

Our storm sewer system does not go to a treatment plant before it discharges to the Arkansas River and Four Mile Creek. Anything that enters the system has the potential to enter our waterways. Oil, antifreeze, pet waste, yard waste, trash and other pollutants will contaminate the waterway, making it less safe for human and wildlife use. Our drinking water comes from the Arkansas River – the more pollutants that enter, the more that has to be removed and treated before use.

Reporting an illicit discharge:

If the discharge or spill is large and potentially a hazardous substance, call 911 right away. Be prepared to provide information concerning type and size of spill, if known. Also report the color of the material, if any smoke or vapors can be seen, any injuries and the type of vehicle or containers involved. Stay upwind and uphill from the material and keep people out until emergency assistance arrives. For smaller spills or discharges which are not hazardous, call the Cañon City Stormwater Program at 719-276-5265. If possible, block the leading edge of the spill with dirt, absorbent or rock bags to contain it. If it is an active spill and the source can be determined, close the valve, set the container upright or plug the leak. Very small spills or drips can be cleaned up using sand, kitty litter or absorbent, which can then be swept up and placed in the trash.

Pollutants of special concern:

Nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus are of special concern as is sediment. When too much nitrogen and phosphorus enter waterways they can act as catalysts to promote algae growth, leading to massive overgrowth called an “algae bloom”. Algae blooms consume large amounts of oxygen that fish, shellfish and other aquatic organisms need to survive. They cloud the water blocking sunlight which is needed by the plants in the water to grow and to produce oxygen. Algae can also clog fish gills, reducing the amount of oxygen they are able to extract from the water. Certain types of algae can emit poisons which can cause health problems for humans, pets and wildlife. Coming into contact with these poisons can cause stomach aches, rashes or more severe problems for humans and can severely sicken or kill pets and wildlife. Humans can also become sick after eating fish or shellfish which have absorbed these toxins. Harmful algae blooms can also release airborne toxins which can cause sore throats, headaches and serious respiratory problems.

Excess sediment clouds waterways, leading to a decrease in the amount of sunlight which filters through. Decreased sunlight can affect aquatic plant life resulting in less oxygen being produced which is needed by the aquatic animal life for survival. Sediment can scour river and stream bottoms, changing the habitat for the insects fish feed on. It can also cover areas fish need for spawning, leading to decreased populations.

Tips to prevent pollution and illicit discharges:

- Don't litter, pick up trash, and keep garbage tote lids closed to prevent wind-borne trash
- Pick up after your pets to prevent the waste from entering the storm system
- Use a commercial car wash, or wash your vehicle on a non-paved surface at home. Use nontoxic, phosphate-free soaps.
- Sweep driveways, sidewalks and parking lots rather than hosing them down. Place the sweepings in the trash.
- Use non-phosphorus or low-phosphorus fertilizers and apply only when needed. Use the recommended amount.
- Do not dump yard waste in the street; bag it or compost it.
- Clean up automotive spills and drips immediately using kitty litter, sand or absorbent. Sweep up the material and place in the trash.
- Dispose of left over chemicals, paint, and used automotive fluids properly. Used oil can be taken to local auto parts stores for recycling. Paint may be taken to local retailers for recycling – check first to make sure they participate in the program. Or it can be donated to Habitat for Humanity's ReStore. Kitty litter or sand can be added to other chemicals to absorb it then placed in the trash.



“When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.” – John Muir

Please feel free to direct any concerns or questions to Glenda DeBekker, City of Cañon City Stormwater Program at either 719.276.5265 or grdebekker@canoncity.org.

Upcoming Events

City Leaf Pickup:

The Cañon City Streets Department will be picking up leaves in late fall; exact dates will be announced on the City website, social media and through radio public service announcements. Bagged leaves need to be placed on the property near the curb during the pickup time frame, not in the street. If you aren't going to participate in the pick-up program, leaves should be bagged and placed in or near your garbage dumpster for pickup by the garbage company. Leaves can also be left in place, either intact or mulched, to provide food and shelter for small mammals, birds and insects. Remember, it is against City Stormwater Regulations to place loose leaves, yard waste or other items in the curb and gutter. Those who do so may face enforcement actions from the City Stormwater Program.

City Shredding Event:

The City will be accepting paper items for shredding on Thursday, November 14th from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm and on Friday, November 15th from 7:00 am to 10:00 am. Items can be brought to the lower lobby at City Hall, 128 Main St during these times. Cost is \$0.50 per pound; cash only. All items will be shredded on November 18th.

National Take a Hike Day:

On November 17, 2024, get out on the trail and celebrate National Take a Hike Day. Enjoy the beauty of our local trails and parks and reconnect with nature. Remember to practice the Leave No Trace principals:

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
 - Pack In/Pack Out
- Leave What You Find
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate of Others
- Minimize Campfire Impacts