



City of Cañon City

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Fourth Quarter 2011 Stormwater Management Program News

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Current and past newsletters are now posted on the City of Cañon City's website. For those who now receive their water bill by email, please visit www.canoncity.org/Utilities/Stormwater.htm to read the most current newsletter. The 2010 Annual Report and 2010 Arkansas River Water Quality Report are also available on line.

The City undertook several projects this year which involved or impacted stormwater infrastructure. Some of the areas where work was done include South 12th Street; Cone, Elizabeth and Cottonwood Avenue; Fremont Drive, 14th and Main Streets; 10th Street and Mystic Avenue; 10th Street and Whipple Avenue; Riverside Avenue and the Santa Fe Depot parking lot.

The Stormwater Department will be meeting with the Dawson Ranch Home Owner's Association in September to discuss drainage concerns and establish priorities for projects in the area into the future.

Plans are underway for a Household Hazardous Waste Collection day in April, 2012. Watch for upcoming announcements detailing the date and time and what will be accepted.

WATER QUALITY IN CAÑON CITY:

The goal of the City of Cañon City's Stormwater Program is to help protect the quality of the water in the Arkansas River and Four Mile Creek. We strive to accomplish this by preventing as much pollution as possible from being carried to the river and creek by stormwater runoff or from entering the storm sewer system directly. Public education is one of the main tools we use to help keep our waters clean. As more people enjoy activities such as festivals, the Riverwalk, the White Water Kayak Park and rafting along and on the river, it is more important than ever that they understand the impact their actions can have on water quality.

First, though, let's talk about what a "pollutant" is. When most people envision pollution or a pollutant, they think of trash and litter or major oil spills in the ocean. These are pollutants, but there are a multitude of other substances that are also considered pollutants when discharged into water. Sewage, chemical wastes, biological material, incinerator residue, ash, munitions, radioactive materials, heat, rock, sand, dirt and industrial and agricultural waste can all be pollutants. So, you think "OK – these can cause pollution, but I don't discharge any of these things". On the contrary, many everyday activities can result in potential pollutants being discharged. Here are some examples:

- ∞ Chemical wastes: Many substances used every day contain chemicals which can be harmful to people, animals and the environment. Household cleaners, automotive fluids, fertilizers, pesticides and paint can all cause pollution if they are not used and disposed of properly.
- ∞ Sewage and biological materials: Septic systems that are not working properly and illegal connections between the sanitary sewer and storm sewer systems can contribute to pollution. Biological materials include yard and landscaping waste, food waste, trash and pet waste. Disposing of these items in a drainage channel or placing them in the street gutter can lead to pollution.
- ∞ Ash: Burning yard waste and debris or trash in a drainage channel can result in water pollution.
- ∞ Sand and dirt: When you hose down your driveway or sidewalk, or as a business, power wash the parking lot dirt and sand, along with oil and grease can be washed directly to the river.

So, your next thought is, "I don't do any of these things along the river or creek." Probably not – most people do tend to be more conscientious when they are enjoying themselves around water. But, no matter where you live in Cañon City, your everyday activities can impact the quality of the water in the Arkansas River. Anything that ends up on the ground has the potential to be carried to the river or Four Mile Creek by stormwater runoff. The

storm sewer system drains directly to the river and creek *without being treated*. Stormwater and ground water in drainage channels also eventually end up in the river and creek.

Hopefully, your final thought is, “What can I do to lessen my impact on water quality?” Here are some tips:

- Completely use household cleaners and chemicals before disposing of the containers. When containers with fluids are put in the trash there is the potential for the fluid to leak out onto the ground and be picked up by stormwater runoff. The same goes for paint. If you are unable to completely use the paint, think about sharing it with a neighbor or friend. Cat litter can be added to left over paint to cause it to solidify; then it can be placed in the trash.
- Clean up automotive leaks and spills immediately using cat litter or other dry absorbent. Sweep up the material and place it in the trash.
- Keep trash containers covered to prevent trash from blowing out. Don't toss trash out of your car while driving or drop trash on the ground.
- Don't over apply pesticides and fertilizers. Excess chemicals won't be absorbed into your lawn and can wash off with over-watering of your lawn or during rain.
- Bag yard waste such as grass clippings and leaves and place in the trash. Don't dump it in the street gutter or a drainage channel. Or think about composting. Don't store landscaping materials such as rock and mulch along the street curb. Stormwater runoff can wash dirt and other materials off of it and carry it to the river.
- Don't burn trash or yard waste in drainage channels.
- Pick up after your pets, both at your home and when you are walking them. Place the pet waste in a plastic bag and put it in the trash.
- Sweep your sidewalks and driveway instead of hosing them off.
- Consider washing your car at a commercial car wash or on an area where the water can soak into the ground. If you use a biodegradable soap it won't harm your lawn and the grass and soil will act as filters to remove grease and dirt from the wash water.
- Don't dump **any substance** down a storm drain.

As mentioned above, public education is one of the main tools used to help keep pollutants out of the river. The more people learn about how their activities can affect water quality, the easier it is for them to make decisions on how they can help prevent pollutants from getting into our river and creeks. But public education is not the only tool the Stormwater Program utilizes to keep our waters as clean as possible. Street sweeping, inlet cleaning and proper construction practices are used by the City to prevent pollutants from entering the storm sewer system. Stormwater personnel also monitor where the storm sewer system empties into the Arkansas River and Four Mile Creek. If a pipe is found to be discharging during dry weather, water samples are taken to determine the source of the discharge. The source is then removed from discharging to the storm sewer system. There are some discharges which can enter the storm sewer system and not have an enforcement action taken. These include water line flushing or other potable water sources, lawn watering, irrigation return flows, uncontaminated ground water (natural or pumped), residential car washing, fire fighting activities and street wash water. Stormwater personnel may also require removal or clean-up of materials that are found that have the potential to cause an illegal discharge.



Remember: The responsibility for keeping our City's and State's waterways clean for all to enjoy ultimately falls to everyone in the choices they make. Please make wise choices.

Please feel free to direct any concerns or questions to Glenda DeBekker, City of Cañon City Stormwater Program at either grdebekker@canoncity.org or 276-5265. You may also write to The City of Cañon City's Stormwater Program, P.O. Box 1460, Cañon City, CO 81215-1460.