

Limitations

Because pet waste management is focused toward individual pet owners, the program is dependent upon the participation and cooperation of all owners. Many pet owners consider it a nuisance to consider the environmental and aesthetic benefits of pet waste management.

The reluctance of many residents to handle dog waste is the biggest limitation to controlling pet waste. Table 1 provides factors that compel residents to pick up after their dog, along with some interesting rationalizations for not doing so.

Table 1. Dog Owners' Rationale for Picking Up or Not Picking Up After Their Dog (HGIC, 1996)	
Reasons for not picking it up:	Responses:
Because it eventually goes away	Pet waste has been shown to be a major contributor to bacteria in certain surface waters
Too much work	Hygiene/health reasons
On edge of my property	Neighborhood courtesy
It's in my yard	Keep the yard clean and green
It's in the woods	Bacteria knows no bounds – it can be a problem anywhere, especially if it is near a water source
Not prepared	Be better prepared – it's as easy as taking along a plastic bag and dispose of properly
No reason	There is no excuse
Small dog, small waste	One day's waste from one dog or cat can contain up to 5 billion bacteria
Use as fertilizer	Dog waste can burn your lawn
Sanitary reasons	How sanitary is it to leave it for others?
Own a cat or other kind of pet	Cat (or other pet) waste also contains bacteria

Contact Information

Crook County Natural Resource District
 PO Box 1070
 Sundance, WY 82729
 Phone: (307) 283-2501
 Fax: (307) 283-2170

Email: john.williams@wy.usda.gov (or)
christine.galloway@wy.nacdnet.net.

Things you can do to prevent storm water pollution

DON'T LITTER – litter in lawns, parking areas and streets will wash into the storm sewers and eventually find its way to the stream. Put trash in plastic bags in the dumpster / trash can

DON'T OVERFILL DUMPSTERS

CLEAN UP AFTER PETS – pet wastes contain bacteria that are harmful to aquatic wildlife. Waste that is not picked up can wash into the storm sewer or stream during rainfall events. Pick up pet waste ASAP and dispose of it in a toilet or trash can.

CAR MAINTENANCE – check your car regularly for leaks and make necessary repairs. Clean up oil spills with substances such as floor dry or cat litter. Drain fluids into a clean and tightly sealed container. **NEVER POUR AUTOMOTIVE FLUIDS DOWN A STORM DRAIN, DRIVEWAY, OR ON THE GROUND.** Take used oil and filter to a collection site.

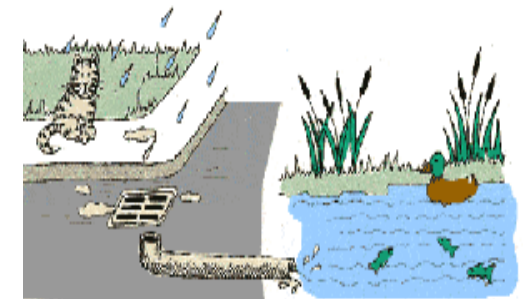
PAINT WASTE – if you paint, don't wash off brushes or rollers in the driveway, parking lot or gutter. Even water-based paints have harmful chemicals. These chemicals will wash into storm drains and find their way to the river.

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES – if you use hazardous substances such as oil based paints, solvents or cleaners, use them sparingly and in accordance with instructions on the manufacturer's label. Store them properly to avoid spilling. In the event of a spill, use absorbent materials such as cat litter to clean up the substance. Dispose of all hazardous substances from the home properly through a hazardous waste collection program.

CROOK COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCE DISTRICT

A Guide
for proper

Pet Waste Disposal



This brochure was made possible through a water quality grant from the Wyoming Department of Agriculture.

The Connection between Pet Waste and Water Quality

It may not be apparent to some, especially those who don't live next to a body of water, how pet waste can affect the water quality of lakes, streams and waterways in your area. To understand the connection, it's helpful to know something about storm drains and how they work.

Background

The storm drain near your home may be a catch basin, manhole, or a grassy ditch at the edge of your property. These collect water runoff from the ground and direct it to a complex system of pipes which drain into the closest body of water – a stream, lake or wetland area. This storm drain system is separate from your sewer system; typically storm water never passes through a sanitary sewer treatment facility. In other words, anything on the ground – no matter how far away from the storm drain – can eventually end up in a nearby waterway.

Pet waste in your yard, on the sidewalk, or in the gutter can easily end up in the storm drain (and therefore our waterways). Animal fecal matter in the water can cause a number of problems. Fecal matter contains nutrients, which cause weeds and algae to grow more rapidly than normal. This robs the water of oxygen needed to support fish and other aquatic life. Pet waste can also contain pathogens such as bacteria, viruses, and parasitic worms which can transmit diseases to humans. When high levels of bacteria are found in a body of water, fishing and shellfish harvesting are restricted because of the threat these pathogens pose for humans.

There are several options available to help lessen the impact your pet can have on our waterways. Some solutions are quick and simple, while others require more time and investment. Whatever steps you take to prevent your pet's waste from entering the storm drain system, you will feel good about helping to protect water quality in your area and those you visit. Following are some suggestions:

Watch what you feed your pet

What goes in must come out.....The type of food you give your pet will effect the quality and quantity of pet waste you must deal with. The easier food is to digest, the more completely it will be digested, resulting in smaller stools that will decompose more quickly.

Rice-based food is the most easily digested. Soy and wheat-based foods aren't bad, but corn-based food doesn't break down well at all. Canned foods often contain red dye, which cannot be digested and will pass right thorough an animals system. If a food isn't easily digested, the resulting stool will not break down easily, so read labels carefully. Consult your vet if you have questions about the nutritional value of a particular brand of pet food.

Control where your pet relieves himself

This isn't just a good idea in terms of water quality; it can be a law in most cities. Many people believe that an animal won't soil its own territory and their pets won't use the back yard. This isn't necessarily true.

You can make your yard more appealing to your pet by tilling a small section of the ground, thus reserving that spot for your pets needs.

Sign posting is one of the most common outreach strategies for managing pet waste in areas outside the pet's yard. Signs can be used to designate areas where dog walking is prohibited entirely, where waste must be fully recovered, or where dogs can roam freely. Many communities post neighborhood signs asking pet owners to "Curb your Dog." The rationale behind the request is that dogs walked along the curb are more likely to defecate on the roadside, where the waste can be captured by street sweeping. However, waste deposited in the road is also more likely to be washed down storm drains, so this tactic is not considered nearly as effective as a pooper-scooper ordinance. Some communities have also installed "pet waste stations" with waste receptacles equipped with supplies of waste collection bags, scoops, and shovels.

Compost your pet waste

Gather the fecal matter collected while walking your dog, cleaning your cat's litter box, or picking up your yard and compost it in a large bucket or small separate compost bin. Because the risk of transmitting intestinal parasites and worms is so high, be sure to keep the compost away from areas where children play and do NOT use it on vegetable gardens.

If waste is mixed with grass clippings and allowed to decompose, it should be safe to use on trees, shrubs or flower gardens. There are products available through pet stores and catalogs which can be added to the waste to help it decompose more quickly and without odor – just be sure to check the labels to be sure they are environmentally friendly.

Bury waste in the yard

Select a spot in the yard away from sensitive areas such as wetlands, wells, or vegetable gardens to bury the pet waste. Dig a hole big enough that fecal matter will not get mixed in with topsoil and keep the area covered. You may want to compost the waste a little before burying it.

Flush waste down the toilet or install a pet septic system

If you are on a sewer system, you can dispose of the fecal matter collected when walking your dog, emptying the cat litter pan, or cleaning the yard by flushing it down the toilet. This ensures that it stays out of the storm drains and is treated. **Be sure to separate the solids from cat litter before flushing – don't flush cat litter!!** If you have a private septic tank you may want to consider other options such as a pet septic system. Some connect to your home sewer or septic system; others use enzymes to break down stools; allowing them to leach into the ground.



(Continued on back)