

Dear Resident,

We need your help! As part of the City's stormwater pollution prevention efforts, the City wants to educate pet owners about the potential issues with pet waste. While many owners are responsible for their pets, it's time to make sure that pet waste is properly managed for the benefit of everyone.

Why is pet waste a problem? Pet waste left on the streets, pavement, yards and driveways does not magically disappear or fertilize the grass. Rain or snow runoff can carry pet waste directly into waterways or storm drains that do not connect to sanitary sewer systems and treatment facilities. Unless people take care of pet waste, its disease-causing microorganisms – such as *Giardia*, Roundworm, *E. Coli* and *Salmonella* – enter our water with no treatment. Pet waste also uses up oxygen and releases ammonia as it decays, causing harm to aquatic organisms and degrading river health. And those who enjoy yards or parks where pets defecate are at risk for infections from the bacteria and viruses stored in pet waste.

All pet owners must do their part. There are currently nearly 3,000 households in Des Plaines with registered pets, and each pet “goes” at least once or twice a day. That's a lot of pets, and a lot of waste!

Tips for handling your pet's waste:

- Carry disposable bags with you on every walk. Check for holes beforehand. Use the bag as a glove to scoop up the waste, then tie the bag shut and put it in a trashcan.
- Flush your pet's waste down the toilet where it will flow through the sewers for treatment. Don't flush kitty litter, as the litter can clog your pipes.
- If you have a large yard, dig a hole in your yard at least one foot deep and 100 feet from any well, ditch, stream, garden or lake. Cover pet waste with plenty of soil.
- Wash your hands with warm, soapy water after dealing with pet waste.
- Never dump pet waste into a storm drain or catch basin.
- Tell others about the risks of leaving their pet's waste on the ground, yard or street.

Let's work together to keep pet waste out of our water resources and recreational areas.

To learn more about the City's stormwater pollution prevention efforts, please visit the NPDES page of the City's website at www.desplaines.org/npdes.

