

## Know Your Watershed!

DuPage County Stormwater Management is studying Winfield Creek, and your help is needed! The County has a grant from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to complete a water quality-based plan for the Winfield Creek Watershed, which encompasses much of Wheaton, Winfield and portions of Carol Stream, Glen Ellyn and Glendale Heights to the north.

As part of this plan, the County is looking for input on water quality concerns related to Winfield Creek. If you have any information, please provide it online at:

[gis.dupageco.org/citizenreporter](https://gis.dupageco.org/citizenreporter)

However, no matter where you live in the watershed, you contribute to the health of the local streams. If you don't have information to contribute, you can still help improve the health of the Winfield Creek Watershed by following the guidance in this brochure!

*"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."  
- Dr. Seuss, The Lorax*

DUPAGE COUNTY



# DUPAGE COUNTY

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

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STORMWATER MANAGEMENT



## WATER WHERE YOU LIVE

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# BACK TO BASICS:

## LEARN ABOUT WATER IN YOUR AREA

### Q: What is a watershed?

**A:** A watershed is an area of land where all of the water drains into the same place. A watershed consists of surface water—lakes, streams, reservoirs and wetlands—in addition to all the underlying ground water.

### Q: What is stormwater run-off?

**A:** Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation from rain or snowmelt flows over driveways, sidewalks, lawns and streets, preventing water from naturally soaking into the ground.

Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt and other non-point source pollutants before flowing into a storm sewer system or directly to a stream, river, lake, wetland or pond. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged **untreated into the waterbodies used for aquatic habitat and recreation.**

### Q: What is non-point source pollution?

**A:** Non-point source pollution is pollution that does not originate from a single source, but, instead, is carried by another source. When it rains, the water washes over the landscape and picks up bits of dirt, oil, fertilizer and even animal waste and carries it through the storm sewer system, untreated, to our rivers and streams. This pollution impairs habitat for native animal species and plants.

### Q: What are the benefits of a healthy watershed?

**A:** Healthy watersheds provide ecosystem, economic and social benefits, including:

- **Improved water quality.** Natural landscapes and floodplains filter pollutants from point and non-point sources, promote nutrient cycling and help retain sediment.
- **Carbon storage opportunities.** Natural land cover and healthy soil resources can sequester carbon to offset greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Reduced costs** of water treatment infrastructure by filtering pollutants and protecting water quality.
- **Increased flood protection.** Healthy watersheds better hold precipitation where it falls, either absorbing into landscapes or slowly running off.
- **Increased property values.** Housing near healthy watersheds has higher property values than those in or around degraded ecosystems and impaired waters.

## TO LEARN MORE

Visit us at: [www.dupageco.org/swm](http://www.dupageco.org/swm)

— or —

Call us: (630) 407-6673

### Q: What can I do to help prevent non-point source pollution?

**A:** There are many ways to help our watersheds, including:

- Plant a rain garden, use native plants and let your lawn grow to 3 inches before mowing.
- Use a rain barrel to harvest water.
- Compost or mulch yard waste. Don't leave it in the street or sweep it into storm drains.
- Fertilize your lawn less. Do a soil test before fertilizing to know what your lawn needs (or doesn't need).
- Dispose of pet waste immediately by burying it, flushing it or throwing it in a garbage can.
- Use less road salt in the winter and sweep up salt to prevent it from reaching waterways.
- Use permeable pavement, which allows for rainwater and snow to absorb into the ground, reducing runoff and pollution.
- Wash your car on your yard so the water infiltrates into the ground.
- Sweep up litter and debris from sidewalks and driveways, especially around storm drains. And, always, remember not to litter!