

Scoop after your pooch

Pet Waste



When you fail to pick up after your pooch, you may be doing more than upsetting the neighbors. Studies conducted over more than a decade in waterways have found that pets produce up to one-third of bacterial pollution in waterways near developed areas.

Problems can occur when pet owners do not pick up pet waste and it is washed into storm water. There are two pollutants in pet waste that can cause problems for water quality: nutrients and bacteria. Nutrients from pet waste cause a process known as eutrophication which leads to an increase in weed and algae growth. The weeds and green water can make boating and fishing difficult or undesirable. This greening of the water can block sunlight affecting bottom-rooted plants. When nutrient levels lessen the weeds and algae decompose using oxygen and possibly causing fish to die.



Bacteria from pet waste can cause a variety of symptoms in humans from nausea to diarrhea to rash and even death for people who have weakened immune systems.

To dispose of pet waste correctly, bag the pet waste and throw it away in the garbage. This is a legal way to dispose of pet waste. You may also bury the waste. When burying pet waste, it is suggested to dig a hole at least one foot deep and place three to four inches of waste in the hole and cover it with at least eight inches of soil. Keep buried waste away from vegetable gardens and water sources. Never add pet waste to compost as it will not get hot enough to kill any pathogens in it. Remember... pets don't pollute, people do. Please always clean up after your pets.

Sources

EPA "Public Education and Outreach on Storm Water Impacts"

"What's the Problem With Pet Waste?" — City of Seattle
<http://www.seattle.gov>