

## WHAT DO CHILD SAFE & FRIENDLY WATERS LOOK LIKE?



They look safe for wading or swimming

## APPEARANCE OF WATERS THAT ARE NOT SO CHILD SAFE & FRIENDLY



Unappealing for wading or swimming



There's lots of fish & other critters to fascinate young and old alike



Devoid of aquatic life



Pleasant and safe to walk along



Severely eroded banks make walking dangerous

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# MAKING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD WATERS MORE CHILD-SAFE & FRIENDLY

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Most homes are within a five-minute walk of a stream or some other body of water. While these waters could be a great place for our children to wade and splash, far too many lack the Child Safe & Friendly characteristics shown on the other side.



If you live in a suburban-urban area then it's likely your local waters are of questionable quality. Fortunately these waters can be restored to a fully child safe-friendly condition. In this factsheet we offer a few things you can do to make your neighborhood waters healthier.

## **DIVERT DOWNSPOUTS ONTO LAWN**

A lot of bird droppings and air pollutants accumulate on our rooftops. With each rain these pollutants wash into neighborhood waters. When a downspout dumps onto a driveway, sidewalk or into the street all the rooftop pollution is delivered to your neighborhood waters. Diverting rainspouts onto lawn or garden areas allows roof runoff to soak into the soil where much of the pollution is removed. To avoid basement wetness, only do this where the soil slopes away from your home.

## **REPLACE LAWN WITH TREES-SHRUBS**

To achieve Child Safe & Friendly waters, about half the land draining to neighborhood waters should be canopied by trees. Trees are sort of clean water machines allowing rain to soak into the soil which eventually emerges from springs very clean. The more trees you plant on your property, the better your local waters will be. Shrubs and ground covering plants are good too since most do not require the fertilizers-pesticides that can harm aquatic life.

## **LAWN POLLUTION**

With proper care lawn impacts to neighborhood waters can be reduced. Mow grass no shorter than

three inches, clippings should be left on the lawn, and only fertilize in the fall. For further advice Google: Maryland Best Practices Lawn Care.

## **PICK-UP PET WASTE**

Pet waste contains many disease-causing organisms which wash into neighborhood waters with each rain. Removing pet waste from your lawn reduces this threat.

## **EXPOSED SOIL = POLLUTION**

To get a sense of compliance with pollution control laws in your area, check out construction sites you pass by. If you see exposed soil on a site then you can assume that



come the next storm a nearby waterway will be polluted. That's because measures like the black silt fence you see here cannot keep enough mud on a site to prevent pollution. If road or building construction has begun then you're also seeing a violation of federal and state clean water laws. You can help ensure that government agencies provide contractors with the support they need to comply with this law by advocating for Child Safe Waters funding.

## **SUPPORT CHILD SAFE WATER FUNDING**

While taking actions around the home is essential, it's not enough to restore neighborhood waters to a Child Safe & Friendly condition. About half the pollution degrading these waters is washed from streets, parking lots and other impermeable surfaces. Though the technology is well established for treating this runoff, most local governments lack the funds to accomplish this goal. If the same is true for your area, then urge your elected officials to consider creating a Child Safe Waters Fund by adding \$25 to \$50 per home to your annual tax-bill.