

What's the Problem With Pet Waste?

Pet waste left in our yards and communities can have many adverse effects on the environment, as it is full of harmful bacteria and excess nutrients. Besides the fact pet waste is a neighborhood nuisance, it can make people sick, especially children who are more likely to come into contact with it while playing. Pet waste left on lawns can also kill or damage grass and other plants.

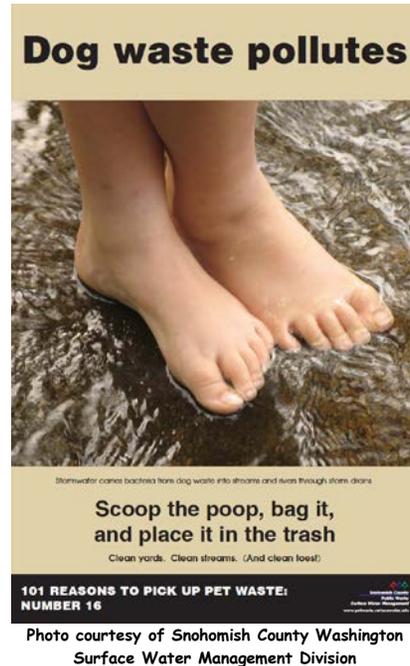


When pet waste is washed into lakes or streams, the waste decays, uses up oxygen and sometimes releases ammonia. This can kill fish.

It also contains nutrients that encourage weed and algae growth.

Water with too many nutrients becomes cloudy and green...imagine this in your backyard pond or stream!

Managing pet waste properly is something easy that everyone can do to make a difference in the quality of our surface waters.



Individual actions can result in a significant water quality improvement when carried out by a majority of people. Unlike some forms of stormwater pollutants, individuals in our watershed can easily and economically manage pet waste and help to keep waters safe and aesthetically pleasing.

WACHUSETT WATERSHED

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DOG WASTE AND SURFACE WATER QUALITY

Every dog produces about $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. of solid waste per day...and about 7.8 billion fecal coliform bacteria.

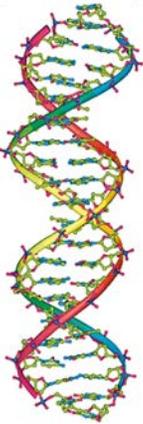


See DWSP's Public Service Announcement video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2_FksK6l-s.

When pet waste is left on the ground, rain or snowmelt carries the bacteria into our surface water supplies, either directly or through the storm drain system.

Microbial Source Tracking (MST)

Microbial Source Tracking is a set of techniques used to determine sources of fecal indicator bacteria in the environment. MST tests attempt to determine whether fecal bacteria are being introduced into water bodies through human, wildlife or domestic animal sources.



DCR Division of Water Supply Protection has had MST tests performed on several streams that flow to the reservoir. Initial results indicate that dogs are a major contributor of bacteria to these waters. **We need your help** to eliminate bacteria by picking up after your pet in your yards and while on walks.

Rainfall and snowmelt in the Wachusett Watershed goes directly into our streams, rivers and lakes untreated through the storm drain system. Along its way it picks up contaminants in its path. That's why it is important to make sure that pollutants such as pet waste do not end up in our storm drains.

WHY AREN'T DOGS ALLOWED ON DCR WATERSHED LANDS?*

DCR's Watershed lands serve as protection for a sensitive drinking water supply for 2.2 million Massachusetts residents, the Wachusett Reservoir.

Bacteria and other parasites, such as Giardia and Cryptosporidium found in pet waste can survive for long periods when left on the ground. During the next rainfall, these can get washed into the drinking water supply, compromising water quality which is regulated by state and federal laws.

*** Dogs are ONLY ALLOWED on the portion of the Oakdale Rail Trail not owned by DCR (Thomas Street to the I-190 overpass).**

Please pick up after your pet and DO NOT throw bagged waste into the woods!

How you can help



- BRING IT- Always bring a plastic bag when you walk your dog.
- BAG IT-Use the bag as a glove to pick up the pet waste. Scoop up the waste and turn the bag inside out around the waste.
- DISPOSE IT- Properly dispose the waste by placing it in a trash can or flushing it unbagged down the toilet. **NEVER THROW WASTE DOWN A STORM DRAIN!**
- WASH YOUR HANDS
- Pick up after your pet in your yard.
- Only bring your dog where dogs are allowed.