

PET CARE PRODUCTS

Pet care products also make their way into lakes, streams, and the ocean.

- If possible, wash small pets indoors. If you do wash your pet outdoors, use your lawn or other vegetated area to avoid generating runoff into the street and storm drains.
- Even biodegradable soaps and shampoos can be harmful to aquatic life.
- Flea, tick, and fly control products can also wash into storm drains. Use less toxic alternative products. See “What You Should Know about Flea and Tick Products” at www.hsus.org/pets/pet_care
- Traditional clumping clay kitty litters often contain silica dust. Try using litter made from environmental friendly alternative materials such as recycled newspaper, corn or wheat by-products, or reclaimed wood materials that do not generate dust.

PET WASTE AND POLLUTION

Improper disposal of pet waste adversely affects water quality, wildlife, and public health.

While it's not usually possible to control fecal material coming from wildlife sources, it is possible to reduce the amount of fecal material entering lakes, streams, and the ocean from pets.



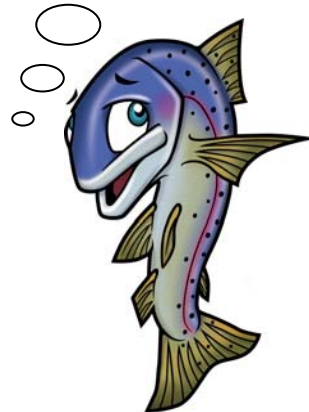
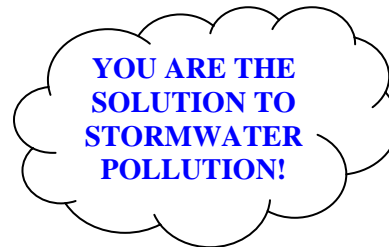
Pet waste seems like a small problem, but when you add it up – it's a BIG problem that continues to grow!

According to the Humane Society of the United States, there are about 74.8 million dogs and 88.3 million cats that are pets in the U.S. That's a lot of untreated poop!

REPORT STORMWATER POLLUTION

Call the County Stormwater Pollution Hotline at:

(805) 781-5544



Sammy the Steelhead Trout

For More Information

visit our website at:

www.slocounty.ca.gov/pw/stormwater



County of San Luis Obispo
Stormwater Management Program

The Scoop on Poop

*The County of San Luis Obispo
Guide to Safe and
Environmentally Friendly Pet
Waste Management*



**Pet Owners Guide to
Water Quality Protection**

PET WASTE AND STORMWATER

Improperly managed pet waste can lead to water pollution and can make people and wildlife sick. When it rains, pet waste left on the ground washes into storm drains and flows directly into lakes, streams, and the ocean without any treatment. You can help protect water quality by following the pet care tips provided in this brochure.



Remember: Anything entering a storm drain goes directly to lakes, streams, and the ocean UNTREATED!

PET WASTE: HUMAN & PET HEALTH

Pet waste can carry disease-causing viruses, bacteria, protozoa, and parasitic worms that can be transmitted to humans and other pets. Some of the diseases that can be spread via pet waste include:

- **Toxoplasma:** a parasite carried by cats that can cause birth defects if a woman becomes infected during pregnancy. This parasite also infects sea otters.
- **Giardia:** a parasite that causes diarrhea and is transmitted via water contaminated with feces.
- **Roundworms, Hookworms, and Tapeworms:** parasitic worms transmitted from pets to other pets and to humans via fecal material.
- **Salmonella:** the most common bacterial disease transmitted from pets to humans via contact with feces.

Fecal coliforms: Bacteria including *E. coli* that are present in human and animal waste. Coliforms are pollutants of concern in local creeks and beaches. High levels of coliforms lead to local beach postings and indicate that:

- Other harmful microorganisms may be present in the water as well and
- A potential health risk may exist for individuals exposed to the water.

PET WASTE AND WILDLIFE

Pet waste can harm wildlife and their habitat:

- As pet waste decomposes, it depletes oxygen from water. Low oxygen levels can cause fish kills.
- Cats carry the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii* which is shed in their feces and is believed to contribute to increased rates of sea otter mortality.
- Pet waste contains nutrient pollutants that encourage excessive weed and algal growth. Nutrient pollutants degrade water quality and can contribute to wildlife poisoning outbreaks by stimulating harmful algal blooms. Nutrient pollutants also lead to the development of dead zones in the ocean.



PROPER PET WASTE DISPOSAL

Pet owners are responsible for picking up after their pets! Pet waste becomes a pollutant when it enters a storm drain or lake, stream, or the ocean.

In public areas, within unincorporated San Luis Obispo County, you are required to undertake all practicable measures to reduce such pollutants to County storm drains (County Code 8.68.030(i), 8.68.110)

It is easy to pick up after your pet. Follow these simple tips:

- Take a bag with you on walks so you can **pick up after your dog.**
- Pick up dog waste from your yard. It is **NOT** a healthy fertilizer.
- Place dog waste in a container and **dispose of it in the trash.** Biodegradable plastic bags work well. You can also reuse your daily newspaper sleeve for this purpose.
- Place used cat litter in a container and dispose of it in the trash. **Never flush cat litter or cat waste down the toilet.**
- Do not place pet waste or manure on stream banks or in dry creek beds or drainages.
- If you compost manure, place the compost pile in an area that will not drain to a storm drain, ditch, drainage, lake, creek, river, or the ocean. Make sure you maintain an adequate setback distance for your manure and compost piles to ensure that they cannot contribute to stormwater pollution.

