

## STORMWATER VOCABULARY

### AQUIFER

A body of rock or sediment that holds groundwater.

### BERM

A constructed barrier of compacted earth.

### BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE (BMP)

Describes ways to manage your land and activities to mitigate pollution of surface and groundwater near you.

### CAPTURE ZONE

The surface and subsurface area surrounding a water well or wellfield which supplies a public water system, through which contaminants are reasonably likely to move toward and reach such water well or wellfield within a specified period of time.

### CATCH BASIN

A receptacle, located where a street gutter opens into a stormwater sewer, designed to retain matter that would not readily pass through the sewer.

### CONTAMINANT

Any physical, chemical, biological or radiological substance or matter that degrades water quality and/or threatens the safety of its intended use such as drinking water. Some contaminants are only an aesthetic concern, while others are considered hazardous to your health.

### CULVERT

Pipe or concrete box structure which drains to open channels, swales, or ditches under a roadway or embankment typically with no catch basins or manholes along its length.

### EUTROPHICATION

A common process brought about by over fertilizing with excess phosphorus and nitrogen entering an aquatic system, creating overgrowth of aquatic plants, that then die off and get broken down by microorganisms that deplete the oxygen levels in the water.

### EVAPOTRANSPIRATION

The combined loss of water from an area through transpiration of plants and evaporation from soil or water.

### GLACIAL DRIFT

A general term for unconsolidated sediment transported by glaciers and deposited directly on land or in the sea.

### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

An approach to water management that stores, protects, and mimics natural systems and their ability to control and regulate water movement.

### ILLICIT DISCHARGE

Any discharge into a storm drain that is not composed entirely of stormwater.

### IMPERVIOUS SURFACE

A hard surface area which either prevents or retards the entry of water into the soil mantle as under natural conditions prior to development; and/or a hard surface area which causes water to run off the surface in greater quantities or at an increased rate of flow from the flow present under natural conditions prior to development.

## INFILTRATION OR PERCOLATION

The process by which water on the ground surface enters the soil.

## NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM (NPDES)

The part of the Clean Water Act which requires point source and non-point source dischargers to obtain permits for stormwater collection systems. In Michigan, these permits, referred to as NPDES permits, are administered by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE).

## NON-POINT SOURCE OF POLLUTION

Contaminants found in water from a source that cannot be specifically defined. For example, contamination resulting from urban runoff, agricultural infiltration or runoff. These are harder to identify pollutants that come from several different sources.

## PERMEABILITY

The capacity of rock or soil to transmit water.

## POINT SOURCE OF POLLUTION

Contaminants found in water that can be readily identified from a specific source such as a leaking underground storage tank or a factory sewage pipe.

## POLLUTANTS

Stormwater pollution can include chemicals, fast food wrappers, cigarette butts, Styrofoam cups, sewage overflow, cooking oil, bacteria from pet waste, used motor oil, fertilizers, paint and construction debris.

## PPB - PARTS PER BILLION

## PPM - PARTS PER MILLION

## PRECIPITATION

Rain, snow, sleet, or hail that falls to the ground as a part of the water cycle.

## RAIN GARDEN

A specifically designed landscape planted with native flowers to help absorb, slow down, and retain stormwater runoff.

## RIPARIAN ZONE

Land that runs adjacent or alongside a waterbody.

## SANITARY SEWER OVERFLOW (SSO)

A condition in which untreated sewage is discharged from a sanitary sewer into the environment prior to reaching sewage treatment facilities. When caused by rainfall it is also known as wet weather overflow. Examples are blockage or broken of sewer lines, infiltration/inflow of excessive stormwater into sewer lines during heavy rainfall, malfunction of pumping station lifts or electrical power failure.

## STORMWATER

Water that originates from precipitation and is a type of surface water created during abnormally large rain or snow falls.

## STORMWATER RUNOFF

It is stormwater running off, draining away and flowing over ground surfaces. It is created when rain falls or snowmelt run off roads, driveways, parking lots, rooftops and other paved or impervious surfaces that do not allow water to soak into the ground.

## SURFACE WATER

Water that collects on the ground surface from precipitation (oceans, streams, lakes, ponds, and other bodies of water found on the Earth's surface).

## TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL)

The maximum amount of pollutants that a system can receive and still meet water quality standards.

## WATERSHED

An area of land that drains to a single surface water outlet and is separated from other watersheds by a divide.

## WATER TABLE

The top of an unconfined aquifer where water pressure is equal to atmospheric pressure; in other words, the surface between the zone of saturation and the zone of aeration. The water table depth fluctuates with climate conditions on the land surface above and is usually gently curved and follows a subdued version of the land surface topography.

## WELLHEAD PROTECTION

A surface and subsurface land area regulated to prevent contamination of a well or well-field supplying a public water system.

## WETLAND

An area inundated or saturated by ground or surface water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.