



# Nonpoint Pointers

Understanding and managing nonpoint source pollution in your community

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No.

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## Opportunities for Public Involvement in Nonpoint Source Control

Over the last 25 years, communities have played an important role in addressing nonpoint source (NPS) pollution, the Nation's leading source of water-quality problems. When coordinated with federal, state, and local environmental programs and initiatives, community-based NPS control efforts can be highly successful. To learn about and help control NPS pollution, contact the community-based organizations and environmental agencies in your area. These groups often have information about how citizens can participate in the following NPS control activities.

### Volunteer Monitoring

Local groups organize volunteers of all skill levels to gather water quality data. This information can help government agencies understand the magnitude of NPS pollution. More than 500 active volunteer monitoring groups currently operate throughout the United States.

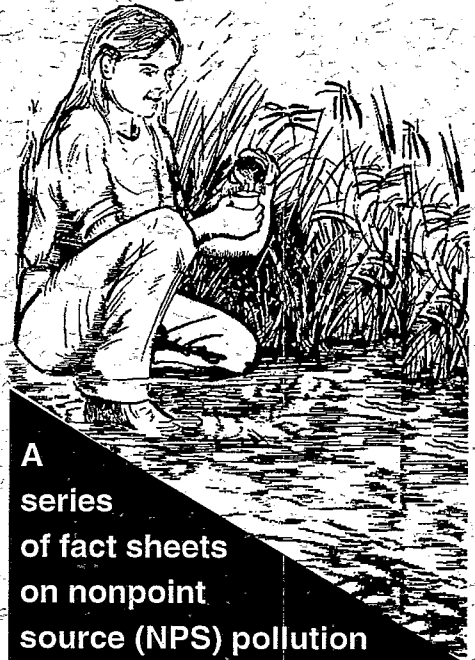
Monitoring groups may also have information about other NPS pollution projects, such as beach cleanups, stream walks, and restoration activities.

### Ecological Restoration

Ecological restoration provides opportunities for the public to help out with a wide variety of projects, such as tree planting and bank stabilization in both urban and rural areas. Restoration efforts focus on degraded waters or habitats that have significant economic or ecological value.

### Educational Activities

Teachers can integrate NPS pollution curricula into their classroom activities. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), federal and state agencies, private groups, and nonprofit organizations offer teachers a wide variety of materials. Students can start on an NPS control project in the primary grades and pursue their work through intermediate and secondary levels.



A  
series  
of fact sheets  
on nonpoint  
source (NPS) pollution

***Did you know  
that volunteers  
often collect  
information on the  
health of water-  
ways and the  
extent of NPS  
pollution?***

NPS pollution occurs when water runs over land or through the ground, picks up pollutants, and deposits them in surface waters or introduces them into ground water.

## RELATED PUBLICATIONS

- Additional fact sheets in the Nonpoint Pointers series (EPA-841-F-96-004)
- Clean Water in Your Watershed, Terrene Institute, Washington, DC, 1993
- Cleaner Water Through Conservation (EPA-841-B-95-002)
- Compendium of Educational Materials on the Water Environment, Alliance for Environmental Ed., Inc., Marshall, VA, 1992
- EPA Journal, Vol. 17, No. 5, Nov/Dec 1991, (EPA-22k-1005)
- Environmental Resource Guide, Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention, Air & Waste Management Assoc., Pittsburgh, PA
- Handle With Care, Terrene Institute, Washington, DC, 1991
- National Directory of Volunteer Environmental Monitoring Programs (EPA-841-B-94-001)
- The Quality of Our Nation's Water: 1994 (EPA-841-S-95-004)
- Xeriscape Landscaping (EPA-840-B-93-001)

To order any of the above EPA documents, call or fax the National Center for Environmental Publications and Information.

Tel (513) 489-8190

Fax (513) 489-8695

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Nonpoint Source Control Branch  
Washington DC 20460

### Internet Address:

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/index.html>

## Water Conservation

Using technologies that limit water use in the bathroom, kitchen, laundry room, lawn, driveway, and garden can reduce the demand on existing water supplies and limit the amount of water runoff. More than 40 states now have some type of water conservation program to help citizens and businesses implement conservation practices. Government agencies, utilities, and hardware stores have information about products that help households conserve water.

## Household Management

Learning to limit NPS pollution at the household level can reduce the overall impact of NPS pollution on water quality. Households, for example, can irrigate during cooler hours of the day, limit fertilizer applications to lawns and gardens, and properly store chemicals to reduce runoff and keep it clean. Chemicals and oil should not be poured into sewers. Pet wastes, a significant source of nutrient contamination, should be disposed of properly. Households can also replace impervious surfaces with more porous materials.

## Public Meetings and Hearings

Decisions made during public hearings on stormwater permitting and town planning can determine a community's capability to manage NPS pollution over the long term. Laws or regulations may require federal, state, or local agencies to hold public hearings when permits are issued or when town plans are formed. Notices about hearings often appear in the newspaper or in government office buildings.

## Community Organizations

Many communities have formed groups to protect local natural resources. These community-based groups provide citizens with information about upcoming environmental events in their watershed, such as ecological restoration, volunteer monitoring, and public meetings. Watershed-level associations are particularly effective at addressing a wide range of NPS pollution problems.

## Environmental Information on the Internet

Citizens can obtain a great deal of environmental data and educational material through a computer linked to the World Wide Web. EPA's site (<http://www.epa.gov>) on the Web provides up-to-date information on Agency activities and enables citizens to find out about air and water quality data in specific communities.

EPA supports NPSINFO, a forum for discussion of NPS issues, including NPS education. Citizens with access to e-mail can subscribe to NPSINFO free-of-charge by sending an e-mail message to:

[listserv@unixmail.rtpnc.epa.gov](mailto:listserv@unixmail.rtpnc.epa.gov)

and include in the body of the message:

**subscribe NPSINFO (your first name) (your last name)**

Other federal, state, tribal, and local agencies, as well as businesses and nonprofit groups, also provide environmental information on the World Wide Web.