

## What is polluting York County's waters?

There are two major types of pollution that York County's streams and creeks are being impacted by - and they might not be what you would expect.

**Nutrients** - Nutrients are found in lawn and farm fertilizers, animal waste, septic systems, and industrial sources. Two nutrients in particular - nitrogen and phosphorus - are found in high quantities in York's waters. These nutrients get picked up by stormwater and washed into the streams. Nutrients can be good, but too much can cause problems for aquatic life.

**Sediment** - Sediment is made up of small particles of dirt and other debris that gets washed into streams from fields, yards, and roads, and also from erosion of the banks of the streams themselves. Sediment turns water murky and blocks sunlight that plants and aquatic animals need to survive.

## Where is the problem?

Impaired waters can be found in almost any part of York County.

The Susquehanna River's many tributaries all pick up pollution as they wind their way across fields and through towns. York County has several major creeks: the Codorus, Conewago, Kreutz, Muddy, and Yellow Breeches, but pollution can be found in any small stream or creek. There is no single source - or solution.



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**York County Coalition  
for Clean Waters**

For more information, visit  
[www.watershedsyork.org/york-coalition-for-clean-waters.html](http://www.watershedsyork.org/york-coalition-for-clean-waters.html)

Published with generous donation from



Cover photos by  
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# Healing York County's Waters

## Background

In 2010, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) surveyed York County's water health. They discovered that, much like other parts of Pennsylvania, more than 50% of the County's streams are polluted. EPA put all of Pennsylvania on a "pollution diet" restricting the amount of pollutants that can be added to the State's waterways.

In the next three years, York County must reduce the amount of pollution entering its streams by the equivalent of more than 10,000 dump truck loads. To meet that goal, we must invest in green technology and prudent management - not just with expensive new municipal treatment plants.

### What are the consequences of inaction?

- Higher water and sewer bills for costly upgrades to treatment plants.
- More regulations for individual homeowners, such as lawn fertilizer controls and further restrictions on building.
- Increased regulations for small farms, resulting in higher food costs.
- Loss of fish habitat and recreational opportunities.

## York County Taking Action

We all have a role to play in healing York County's waters. Homeowners, renters, farmers, and elected officials - everyone who works, plays, or lives in York County can help.

Cities, townships, and boroughs have a responsibility to plan stormwater control projects. These projects help reduce pollution in our local streams and creeks, and can help reduce local flooding, which causes damage and creates road hazards.



## Here's What You Can Do

**Research ways to reduce stormwater runoff from your property.**

Projects like rain barrels and rain gardens are just some examples of ways you can help reduce the amount of stormwater runoff from roofs and driveways. For more ideas, visit [www.watershedsyork.org](http://www.watershedsyork.org).

**Check your local Stormwater Management Ordinance when making changes to your property.**

Every municipality in York County has rules for dealing with stormwater. Your municipality can help you understand the requirements. You can also use the York County Integrated Water Resources Plan Flowchart Tool, at [www.PAIWRP.com](http://www.PAIWRP.com).

**Report illicit discharges.**

If you see water or another substance being discharged from a pipe or opening, and suspect it is illegal, contact your local municipality or the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

**If you have a septic system - maintain it properly.**

Malfunctioning septic systems are a major source of nutrients being improperly released to local streams. Even if you can't see a problem, a poorly maintained or neglected septic system can be contributing to pollution in nearby streams. Contact your local municipality for guidance.

**Report flooding problems to your local municipality.**

Flooding from excessive stormwater is a sign that a stormwater system may not be functioning properly. In addition, surging water picks up sediment and nutrients and quickly sweeps it into nearby streams and creeks.

