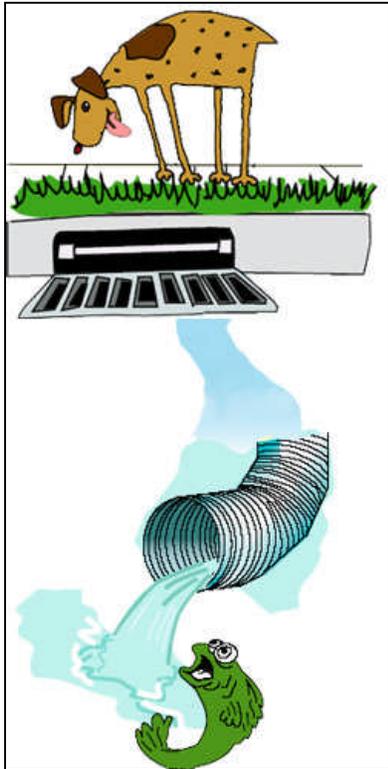


Pet Pollution Can Be a Serious Problem!

When John and Gloria pause for a minute on their daily dog walk, they leave behind in public places a surprising amount of bacteria-filled waste. It seems like such a small amount when you think it's just your dog out there, but it really does add up. Many people don't realize how important it is to take care of their pet waste so it stays out of our storm drains, streams, rivers, beaches and ocean.



The act of John and Gloria walking with their dog is a very common residential activity. Studies show that about half of all dog owners walk their dogs in public places, and about 40 percent of them fail to clean up after their pets.

In a community the size of El Cajon (about 100,000 people and 10,000 dogs), dogs generate about two and a half tons (5,000 pounds) of feces per day. That's nearly two million pounds a year. Since a significant percentage is not properly disposed, that's a lot of bacteria in our neighborhoods, storm drains and watershed. According to even the most conservative estimates, all this pet waste can cause serious environmental harm unless it is properly controlled.

Dog and cat waste left on the ground can be washed into our neighborhood storm drains, all of which drain directly into natural water bodies without treatment of any kind. There the waste contributes to all sorts of problems, such as sick children and mucky waterways choked with algae that suffocates fish and can sometimes be

poisonous to humans.

The same bacteria that make pet waste dangerous to people in parks can make the water unsafe for swimming or drinking. Children and others can get sick if they dunk their heads or accidentally get a mouthful of polluted water. And when waste gets into shellfish beds, it can make clams and oysters unsafe to eat.

Children and others who play in yards or in parks where pets eliminate waste can pick up illnesses from disease-causing bacteria and parasites. These

Dog Poetry

If taking care of number two
is number one to you,
then picking up your doggy
doo
should matter lots to you.

So scoop the poop and bag it
and place it in the trash;
your doggy doo reflects on
you,
It's what your puppy passed!

include diarrhea, fever, muscle aches, headaches, vomiting, roundworms and toxoplasmosis (a parasite carried by cats that can cause birth defects if a woman becomes infected during pregnancy). Other pets can get sick too.

How You Can Make A Difference And Keep Our Water Clean!

When walking with your pet, take a plastic bag or paper cup along and dispose of the waste properly by:

- Flushing pet waste down the toilet, or
- Putting pet waste in the household trash after securely wrapping it. (Never put pet waste in a landscape waste container or the compost bin), and
- Be aware of and follow the Storm Water Management Ordinance that governs pet waste cleanup. The Storm Water Management Ordinance states, *“Pet waste shall not be disposed to the storm water conveyance system or receiving waters.”* Remember that, if not cleaned up and disposed of properly, pet waste will eventually find its way into the storm drain system.

Pet Waste Pledge Card	
I Pledge to do my part to protect water quality in El Cajon by:	
✓ Picking up after my pet	
✓ Properly disposing of pet waste by flushing it down the toilet or disposing of it in the trash	
✓ Encouraging others to do the same	
_____	_____
Signed by	Date

Do You Know How Many Dogs Live In El Cajon?

- Around 10,000 registered dogs reside in the City of El Cajon.
- These dogs create approximately 5,000 pounds of pet waste per day!
- Pets, as well as humans, can catch diseases through coming into contact with infected pet waste.

The number of pets in El Cajon is much greater than the number of wild animals that once lived here. If we kept just a few pets their waste might not be much of a problem. However, we keep a lot of dogs and other pets and it is estimated that there are even more cats than dogs.

You wouldn't want to live in a city that lacked a public sewer system. With as many dogs living in the City of El Cajon, not cleaning up and properly disposing of pet waste can be a pollution problem. By cleaning up your pet waste and properly disposing of it, you can be an important part of the pollution solution. For more information or to report illegal dumping you can contact the El Cajon Storm Water Protection Program at (619) 441-1653 or at www.ci.el-cajon.ca.us.