



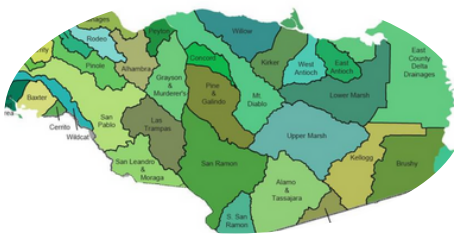
## The Wonders of Watersheds

### ...and Why We Protect Them

#### What Makes a Watershed?

A [watershed](#) (also known as a drainage basin or catchment) is an area of land where water from rain or snowmelt drains into one or more bodies of water. Watersheds are made up of creeks, streams, and rivers that include upland areas and ultimately lead into other larger bodies of water like lakes, reservoirs, bays, and the ocean. Healthy watersheds provide us with clean drinking water and safe fish to eat and are important for ecosystems, biodiversity, and climate resilience.

#### Where is Your Watershed?



Contra Costa contains an awesome 31 watersheds that shed into the Bay or Delta!

- Here are a few watersheds in Contra Costa County:
  - Alhambra Creek Watershed
  - East and West Antioch Creek Watersheds
  - Walnut Creek Watershed
  - Mount Diablo Creek Watershed
  - Marsh Creek Watershed

Locate your watershed or other watersheds in Contra Costa County on the "[Watersheds](#)" page of our website.

#### Drop These Habits



How we take care of our yards, pets, cars, and trash impacts the waterways flowing to our Bay.

- Here are different examples of actions that negatively affect watersheds:
  - Using products that have harmful chemicals in them (pesticides and fertilizers etc.)
  - Dumping trash and household hazardous waste on sidewalks, streets or creeks
  - Not picking up pet waste

Fortunately, our behaviour can also positively impact our waters. Read "Keep Our Watersheds Wonderful."

#### Connecting the Drops



Watersheds provide us with a sustainable water future because they offer an ecosystem of goods and services that are essential to our quality of life.

- Here are a few examples of the major [ecosystem services](#) watersheds provide:
  - Water supply
  - Flood control
  - Nutrients for farming
  - Carbon (dioxide) storage
  - habitat restoration
  - A healthy fish supply
  - Recreation (i.e., swimming, fishing, or kayaking)

#### Keep Our Watersheds Wonderful



- Here are easy steps we can take to help protect our Contra Costa watersheds:
  - Carry bags and dispose of pet waste in the trash
  - Use less pesticides and fertilizers (or [less-toxic products](#)) on plants and lawns
  - Keep trash away from drains
  - Visit our site to find out where to take [household hazardous waste](#)
  - Reduce your use of single-use plastic
  - [Report dumping](#) and join a volunteer clean-up

For more information, visit our "[Residents/Community](#)" tab at [cccleanwater.org](http://cccleanwater.org).



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## Managing Stormwater: A Deep Dive into Our Storm Drain System



Photo by Mick Haupt on Unsplash

### ***How does polluted stormwater impact our waterways? Let's go with the flow and sea...***

When it rains, water flows on our streets and sidewalks and into our storm drains. Storm drains prevent flooding by swiftly collecting excess water and carrying it to our waterways. The problem is, as rainwater travels through the streets, it gathers dirt, oils from cars, chemicals, pet waste, and trash. This polluted rainwater enters our waterways – the sources of our drinking water and the places where we fish for food. When we're not careful or mindful of what we do near storm drains, we risk harming the ecosystem for humans and wildlife by contaminating our rivers, creeks, and the Bay with harmful chemicals, bacteria, and plastics.

Sanitary sewers serve a similar function in our homes and businesses to storm drains. They are a conveyance system to move water from one place to another. However, there is a major difference between stormwater (storm drains) and wastewater (sanitary sewer) – Wastewater gets treated before being released into the environment! The water from sinks, toilets, and showers is flushed down pipes to sewer lines which flow to a dedicated wastewater center where it is treated before being released back to our waterways. Even though this dirty water gets treated, it's important to know what is safe to enter the system. Medicines, toxic waste, and hazardous materials should never be flushed down a toilet or washed down a sink since some of these contaminants can bypass treatment and still impact our waterways. They should always be properly disposed of at your local household hazardous waste facility. (See the helpful links below)

With stormy weather predicted this winter, managing protecting stormwater will require a collective effort. We all have a role to play! The following are some best practices you can do to keep our waterways healthy and fish safe to eat: Sweep and dispose of leaves and debris near or around stormdrains, do not dump oil or dirty water down drains, and last but not least, use trash and recycling bins to deposit your trash and pet waste appropriately.

**Thank you for being a Contra Costa Watershed Protector!**

#### **Here are some helpful resources:**

If you have bulky trash to dispose of, visit <https://resource.stopwaste.org/>.

If you have needles or medicines to get rid of, contact Central County Facility: [Central Contra Costa Sanitary District HHW](#), East County Facility: [Delta Diablo Sanitation District HHW](#) or West County Facility: [West Contra Costa Integrated Waste Management Authority HHW](#) (RecycleMore)



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