

See how **you** can make a difference...
every drop counts.

What homeowners can do to help



What is Save the Rain?

Save the Rain is Onondaga County's program to improve the environment and help Onondaga Lake by reducing the amount of storm water runoff that flows directly into our sewer system.

In some areas, during rain and snow melt events, runoff flows into storm drains that connect to the sewer system. This can sometime result in overflow, which can overload the sewers and send polluted storm water into Onondaga Lake.

The County's Department of Water Environment Protection will lead efforts to save the rain by developing green infrastructure and environmentally friendly solutions to capture storm water where it lands to prevent it from entering the sewer system.

This brochure is an informational guide to help you, the homeowner, think about ways you can "Save the Rain" and prevent it from flowing into sanitary sewer and storm drains. Storm water runoff can carry pollutants such as: leaves, soil, lawn debris, fertilizers, pesticides, motor oil, antifreeze, grease and other chemicals into sanitary sewer and storm drains. You can make a difference. Homeowners can take several easy steps to reduce storm water runoff. Every drop counts, and with your help we can keep Onondaga Lake clean!

www.ongov.net/savetherain

Learn more

More detailed information and instructions on these, and other ideas to Save the Rain can be found at www.ongov.net/savetherain

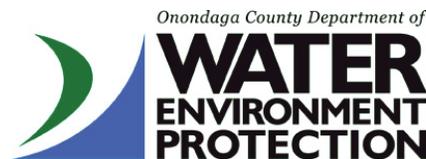
Formore information, please call or write to:

Onondaga County Department of
Water Environment Protection

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What is green infrastructure?

Green infrastructure is an environmentally friendly and sustainable solution for capturing storm water runoff. The use of these natural or engineered systems, enhance overall environmental quality.

Why is green infrastructure so important?

Storm water runoff can have a dramatic impact on the environment. During times of heavy rain or melting snow, sewers can overflow and discharge a combination of runoff and sanitary sewage called a Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) into Onondaga Creek and Harbor Brook. This overflow eventually flows into Onondaga Lake. A combined sewer overflow system is designed to overflow in this way to prevent sewage from backing up into streets and basements.

Green infrastructure strategies provide environmentally friendly sustainable solutions for capturing rainwater where it lands. Green infrastructure solutions can reduce the amount of storm water entering the sewer system which will lead to improved water quality of Onondaga Lake and its tributaries.

What can you do to help?

Businesses can take several steps to prevent storm water runoff. Here are 5 easy ways you can prevent storm water runoff at your business:

Reduce impervious surfaces - Impervious surfaces include your roof, driveway, sidewalks and parking lots. Green roofs reduce rooftop runoff by utilizing vegetation on the rooftop to catch the rain where it lands. Or consider directing your downspouts to a rain garden or cistern, and not to the storm drain on your street. For your driveways, sidewalks and parking lots consider installing permeable paving. These types of surfaces allow storm water to seep into the ground.

Sweep up litter - keeping debris from sidewalks, driveways and parking lots, especially around storm drains can prevent pollutants from entering the sewer system.

Utilize and maintain landscaping to prevent soil erosion - use native tree, shrubs and plants to beautify your site and absorb storm water naturally. Also, be sure to properly maintain existing landscaping to prevent soil erosion.

Use and dispose of chemical products properly - Anytime you use gasoline, paint, motor oil, fertilizer, pesticides or any other chemicals DO NOT dispose of them by pouring them down drains. Businesses should contact the Onondaga County Resource and Recovery Agency for instructions on disposal of these products.

Get involved - learn more about storm water runoff and ways you can help reduce pollution

Green Solutions

There are several examples of green infrastructure solutions. Below are the most common and effective green infrastructure applications:

Green roof is a roof that is partially or completely covered with vegetation and soil planted over a waterproofing membrane. Green roofs are used for storm water management and energy savings, as well as for aesthetic benefits. Green roofs absorb storm water and release it back into the atmosphere through evaporation and plant transpiration, while reducing urban temperatures.

Permeable paving (also known as pervious or porous pavement), is a term used to describe paving methods for roads, parking lots and walkways that allows precipitation to infiltrate through to the soil below.

Cistern is a receptacle for storing rain water. They range in capacity from a few liters to thousands of cubic meters. Owners benefit by reusing the water for landscaping and other activities thus reducing their water bill.

Rain garden is a sunken garden designed to absorb rainwater from impervious areas such as roofs, driveways, walkways, and compacted lawn areas. Rain gardens reduce runoff by allowing storm water to soak into the ground, as opposed to flowing into storm drains and surface waters, which can cause erosion, water pollution, flooding, and diminished groundwater.