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## Storm Water Vocabulary

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- ➔ **Algae**: They are simple single-celled, multi-celled or colonial, aquatic plants that contain the green pigment chlorophyll. They grow by absorbing nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) from the water or sediments. They add oxygen to the water during the process of photosynthesis and represent the basic component of the aquatic food chain.
- ➔ **Algae Blooms**: Refers to the harmful and excessive growths of algae generally caused by excessive nutrients in the water. This often results in scum forming on the water surface and it is associated with a foul odor. These blooms can be potentially harmful to fish, wildlife and humans in extreme situations.
- ➔ **Allocate**: The share or portion given.
- ➔ **Aquifer**: Underground porous rock or sediment that holds groundwater.
- ➔ **Base flow**: The low water level in a perennial stream; that portion of a stream flow derived from groundwater.
- ➔ **Best Management Practices**: Methods determined by land and water managers to describe land use measures designed to reduce or eliminate nonpoint source pollution.
- ➔ **Bioaccumulation**: The progressive build-up of a substance or pollutant that collects in the animal's tissue resulting from repeated exposures. Animals farther up the food chain have higher concentrations, because each level acquires the build-up of the previous level. An example would be that the big fish eating the little fish would equal all the build-up that the little fish acquired from the many, slightly polluted algae it ate.
- ➔ **Condensation**: The process by which a gas turns into a liquid.
- ➔ **Conservation**: The protection, preservation, management, or restoration of wildlife and of natural resources such as forests, soil, and water.
- ➔ **Dissolved Oxygen (DO)**: The dissolved oxygen content is an indication of the status of the water with respect to the balance between oxygen-consuming and oxygen-producing processes. Fish and other desirable clean water biota require relatively high dissolved oxygen levels at all times.

- Ecosystem: All of the interacting systems and organisms in association with their interrelated physical and chemical environment.
- Eutrophication: The process by which lakes and streams are enriched by nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus), which leads to excessive plant growth or algae blooms.
- Evaporation: A physical change where a liquid turns into a vapor or gas.
- Evapotranspiration: A process in which water dissipates into the atmosphere by evaporation from moist soil and plant transpiration.
- Fecal Coliform Bacteria: These are found in the intestinal tracts of warm-blooded animals. Just like *E. coli*, they are used as microbiological indicators that determine the safety of the water for drinking or swimming. They originate from many sources that include bird droppings, pet waste, livestock waste, failing septic systems, stormwater runoff, and sanitary and combined sewer overflows.
- Food Chain: This is the transfer of food energy from successive levels of organisms. An example of this would be algae being eaten by invertebrates, which in turn are eaten by small fish, which are then eaten by larger fish, which are eventually eaten by people.
- Function: The purpose or benefit provided by a specific stage/aspect of a process.
- Groundwater: Water that infiltrates into the ground and renews/recharges underground aquifers.
- Habitat: The given physical characteristics define a particular habitat, whether it is trees for shading fish or deep pools that fish can escape to during a drought. The combination of these different aspects set different habitats apart from each other.
- Headwaters: The source of a stream or river.
- Hydrologic cycle: A circulation of water from a water body to the atmosphere, to the land, back to open water either above or below ground, or directly back into the atmosphere. This is also known as the water cycle.

- Impervious: Not capable of being penetrated or non-permeable. An example would be roads and parking lots that prevent runoff from being absorbed into the soil.
- Impoundment: To accumulate and store in a reservoir.
- Infrastructure: The basic facilities, services, and installations needed for the functioning of a community or society, such as transportation and waterways.
- Infiltration: The movement of water through the soil.
- Landscape: This is defined by the various characteristics, whether natural or man-made, that create the geological features that distinguish one part of the earth's surface from another part. An example would be hills, fields, forest, and water.
- Land use: This describes the dominant types of human activities which are prevalent in the dominant geographic area where they occur. An example would be cropland, forest, pasture land, suburban and urban developments.
- Mainstem: The principal watercourse or stream formed by the smaller contributing tributaries that flow into it.
- Natural Resource: A material source of wealth, such as timber, fresh water, or a mineral deposit, that occurs in a natural state and has economic value.
- Nitrogen: This is one of several nutrients needed by all plants and animals. This is the key component of proteins, and as plants/animals live and die they release many nitrogen compounds into their surrounding environment.
- Nonpoint Source Pollution: This comes from diffuse, undefined sources; it is usually associated with land uses like urban development and agriculture. This kind of pollution and the stormwater runoff it occurs in is considered the most threatening to the nation's water quality.
- Pathogens: An agent that causes disease, especially a living microorganism such as a bacteria or fungus.
- Pervious: Able to be penetrated or permeable. This is a surface that allows rainwater to be absorbed into the soil. An example would be lawn or grasslands.
- Phosphorus: This is one of the major nutrients required for plant nutrition. Excess concentrations can lead to rapid algae or plant growth causing the condition of

accelerated aging of waters or eutrophication. It can enter waterways through many sources which include domestic/industrial wastewater discharge, agriculture, and fertilization of urban and suburban areas.

- Point Source Pollution: Water pollution from an identifiable point or source of pollution such as a pipe or drainage ditch, and the pollutant and its source is known.
- Pollution: The destruction or contamination of a natural resource usually by harmful substances entering the environment.
- Precipitation: Any form of water, such as rain, snow, sleet, or hail that falls to the earth's surface.
- Riparian: The banks or edges of a natural course of water.
- Runoff: Rainwater that flows over the land because the ground and vegetation cannot absorb it.
- Sediment: Solid fragments of material (inorganic or organic) that come from the weathering of rock and are carried by wind, water, or ice, especially those which settle to the bottom of water.
- Sedimentation: The process of depositing or forming sediment.
- Storm sewers: They collect stormwater runoff from streets and yards then deliver that water to a river, lake or local watershed every time it rains or the snow melts.
- Stormwater runoff: The overflow of surface water due to a heavy rain or snowstorm.
- Temperature: This is important to aquatic organisms, because it affects the ability of oxygen to dissolve and the toxicity of various substances found in the water. This also influences the rate of biochemical processes, metabolism, respiration and reproduction of aquatic organisms.
- Topography: the arrangement of the surface of the landscape including hills, valleys, and the positions of natural and man-made features.
- Transpiration: A process where water moves up a plant and out of its leaves as water vapor, and into the atmosphere.
- Tributary: A stream that contributes its water to another stream or body of water.

- Turbidity: This is suspended particles found in water and it is measured by a particle's ability to scatter sunlight. Excessive turbidity can clog the gills of fish and mussels, and can cover the bottom habitats of invertebrates and fish spawning areas.
- Watershed: The entire land area draining into a specific body of water. Watersheds are divided by ridges of high land. This can also be called a Drainage Basin or Water Basin.
- Water users: Anyone who uses water. The various categories of users include domestic, public, industrial, commercial, agriculture, energy production, mining, recreation, fish and wildlife, and navigation.