

When rain falls and snow melts, the runoff produced picks up a variety of contaminants such as oil, metals, salts, pet waste, fertilizer, and grass clippings as it flows over roofs, roadways, sidewalks and lawns.

Stormwater runoff ultimately flows into storm drains.

Remember: storm drains lead directly to our local rivers and streams.

STORMWATER AND PLASTICS:

Stormwater can carry plastic waste to storm drains or directly into nearby water bodies. Once there, plastic waste can flow into the Great Lakes and ultimately our oceans. According to a study by the Rochester Institute of Technology, more than **22 million pounds of plastic pollution end up in the Great Lakes every year!**

Plastic waste does not go away, instead it breaks down into smaller pieces called microplastics. Microplastics are defined as plastic fragments less than 5mm in size (the top of a push pin). These microplastics are very small and have been found in drinking water and in the food chain.



YOU CAN HELP!

Here are some easy alternatives to common single-use plastics:

IF YOU USE	TRY THIS ALTERNATIVE
Plastic grocery bags	Store reusable bags in your car, backpack, or purse, and bring them shopping
Disposable coffee cups	Keep a reusable thermos, or mug with you—most coffee shops will fill it up for you too
Plastic straws	Try no straw, use a reusable straw, or use a compostable straw
Plastic water bottles	Fill up a reusable water bottle before you leave your house
K-cups or single serve coffee	There are reusable coffee pods available, which also cuts down on cost
Plastic sandwich bags	Switch to reusable food storage containers
Plastic cutlery	Keep reusable cutlery with you, such as camping cutlery that comes with its own carrying case to keep them in