

PATHWAY to WATER QUALITY COMING SOON

WHAT IS PATHWAY TO WATER QUALITY?

Water quality affects all Wyoming citizens. We not only need clean water to drink, but also need clean water for irrigating our crops, supporting livestock and wildlife populations, and promoting healthy fisheries, to name just a few of the reasons why clean water is important. The mission of Pathway to Water Quality is to provide an outdoor classroom to educate Wyoming citizens about water quality and their watersheds, and to showcase a variety of innovative and effective conservation approaches and technologies that you can use to help protect the quality of Wyoming's waters.

DID YOU KNOW...WHAT WE DO ON THE LAND CAN AFFECT WATER QUALITY!

As rainfall or snowmelt travels over and through the ground in a watershed, it can pick up contaminants such as oil products, bacteria, fertilizers, and pesticides that are caused by human activity. As the water travels, these contaminants are deposited into streams, lakes, rivers, and groundwater causing what is called nonpoint source pollution. Thus, it is important to realize that what we do on the land at home, on the farm or ranch, and in the cities can affect the water quality in Wyoming's streams, rivers, lakes, and groundwater.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE WATER AFTER IT RAINS?

As rain falls and snow melts, the land "sheds" water and carries it into soil, groundwater, and streams, where it makes its way into larger rivers and eventually to the oceans. Thus, a watershed is an area of land from which water drains to a common point—think of a big bathtub!

What can I do... TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY?



WHAT YOU WILL SEE AT PATHWAY TO WATER QUALITY?

Construction of Pathway to Water Quality has already begun at the Wyoming State Fairgrounds. One of the first things that you will see will be the construction of the Pathway through the fairgrounds. As you will see, the Pathway is made of a special type of concrete pavers. These pavers allow rainwater to pass directly through the block junctures into a storage layer of gravel and sand underneath, then into the soil naturally, thereby filtering the rainwater before it reaches water stored beneath the earth. Water can pass through these pavers rather than running off into storm drains or streams carrying pollutants with it. Over the next few years, additional exhibits will be installed along the Pathway to demonstrate the use of different types of conservation practices that can be used to improve and protect water quality, such as practices for livestock management, urban runoff, wildlife management, soil conservation, and water conservation. Stay tuned for future exhibits! For more information about Pathway to Water Quality, contact...

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WHAT CAN I DO TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY?

There are many ways that we can work to improve and protect Wyoming's water quality. Some conservation practices are complex and may require the help of a natural resource professional or engineer. However, there are also things that each of us can do on a daily basis. Whether you live in a city or in a rural area, the following is a list of 10 simple things that you can do at home to help protect water quality:



Use the minimal amount of fertilizers and pesticides needed for your lawn or garden. Read label directions carefully! Do not apply pesticides or fertilizers to your lawn or garden before or during rain.



Consider planting native plant species in your yard that use less water and have fewer or no pesticide and fertilizer requirements.



Establish plants on bare areas of your yard to prevent soil erosion.



Keep lawn clippings, leaves, and other yard waste out of storm drains and gutters. Compost yard waste or leave lawn clippings on your lawn.



Make sure that household chemicals and automotive products such as paints, cleaners, oil, and antifreeze are disposed of properly. Contact your local government to see if there is a hazardous household waste collection program in your community. Select less-toxic or non-toxic household cleaners when possible.



If using a septic system, make sure it is maintained on a regular basis. Have your septic system pumped and inspected regularly by a licensed septic tank service contractor.



If caring for livestock on your property, manage animal waste to minimize mixing with clean stormwater runoff.



Pick up pet waste.



Clean up spilled oil, antifreeze and brake fluids. Never put used oil or other chemicals down storm drains and street gutters—these outlets drain directly to our streams, rivers, and lakes!



Wash your car on the grass or at a car wash. Washing your car on a concrete driveway means that soap and dirt can wash into the nearest storm drain.