



# PET WASTE AND FECAL COLIFORM

## What are coliform bacteria?

The presence of pet waste in storm water runoff has a number of implications for urban stream water quality, with perhaps the greatest impact from pathogens like fecal coliform. The release of nutrients from the decay of pet waste also promotes weed and algae growth in water bodies.

Fecal coliform are a group of bacteria found in the feces of warm-blooded animals such as people, livestock, pets, and wildlife. Excessive levels of bacteria indicate an increased risk of gastroenteric illnesses such as upset stomach, diarrhea, and infections from pathogenic bacteria and viruses. Nutrients in water typically associated with fecal matter also deplete oxygen in water that is needed by fish and other aquatic life.

One of the **Vermillion River** impairments is fecal coliform. Cleaning up after your pet will also help clean up the river.



## How do I properly dispose of pet waste?

When nature calls, the best option is flush pet waste down the toilet where it will be treated at the sewage treatment plan just like human waste. You can always pick it up in a plastic bag and throw it into the garbage. Pet waste bag dispensers are located in some township parks, please use them.

## What are Pet Waste Collection Systems?

Pet waste collections systems are small structures located where pet owners need them most. These are located in several local parks in Empire Township.

Pet waste stations usually provide an educational message, instructions for proper use, plastic bags for picking up waste, and a garbage can for disposal. There are commercial vendors that manufacture the dispensers, signs, and bags in a variety of sizes and for different applications.

## How do I properly dispose of pet waste?

Pet owners are encouraged to collect their animal's waste so it will not wash into waterways or storm drains. Storm drains do not connect to wastewater treatment facilities. They drain directly into ponds, lakes, wetlands and rivers. Pet waste that remains on the lawn can pose a hazard to pets, children playing outside and adults gardening. Collected pet waste can be placed in a plastic bag and disposed of in trash. Empty bread bags or the plastic bag in which the newspaper is delivered are convenient to use.

