



STORMWATER 101

Q. What is Stormwater?

A. Stormwater is rain or snowmelt that does not immediately soak into the ground.

In natural environments and on a global scale, the process of condensation, evaporation, transpiration, and precipitation creates a natural water cycle.

Precipitation and snowmelt naturally absorb into the ground where it is filtered. This water slowly recharges streams, rivers, lakes, and the ground water supplies such as the Spokane Valley Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer.

As the world has urbanized, fewer open green spaces provide infiltration, and the increase in impervious surfaces such as roads, parking lots, and rooftops have created more surface runoff. This surface runoff is also referred to as stormwater.

When rain and snowmelt flow over these impervious surfaces, the water will either discharge more rapidly to nearby streams and rivers potentially causing erosion and sedimentation or the water can pick up pollutants, trash, oils, and/or chemicals which can affect the surface water quality for both surface and ground water supplies.

In an urban environment, stormwater runoff is directed to one of the following:

1. Stormwater drains to drain in streets that goes to the rivers or lakes and in some cities (not including the City of Post Falls), treatment plants.

OR

2. Stormwater drains to swale which drains to a dry well that infiltrates into aquifer.

