

## Keep Our Streams Clean



Streams are among the most important natural resource in the St. Joseph area. Streams, and the corridors along them, provide many environmental benefits. Streams provide habitat to a variety of plants and wildlife. The vegetation in stream corridors filters stormwater runoff and improves water quality. Because streams flow to the Missouri River, streams play a critical role in maintaining the river's health. Keeping streams clean benefits the whole community.

### What's the Problem?

Many people don't understand the importance of streams to the community. Litter and trash can threaten the health of streams and can also block downstream culverts, increasing the likelihood of flooding. Yard waste dumped in streams is particularly harmful to aquatic life. When yard waste

decays, nitrogen is released and can lead to algae growth. As algae decays, it uses up oxygen in the water that fish and other aquatic species need. If areas surrounding streams are not properly maintained, the environmental benefits that enhance water quality can be lost.

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### What Can You Do?

Everyone can help keep the streams clean and help maintain stream corridors. Here are some tips you can use to do your part:

- Do not dump trash, debris or yard waste in streams.
- Pick up litter and trash in streams and stream corridors. Start or become part of an "Adopt-a-Stream" team that is a steward of a designated stretch of a stream.
- Don't mow up to the edge of a stream. Instead, leave 10 to 25 feet from the edge of the stream to create a buffer that will help minimize erosion and filter stormwater runoff.
- If you own property adjacent to a stream, plant native grasses, plants and trees to help protect the stream banks.

