



Be Part of the Pollution Solution

Individuals can make a difference. Even if you don't live next to a stream, your actions can help prevent water pollution. Start by practicing these water quality tips:

Use Water Wisely

Save water by using dishwashers and washing machines only when they are fully loaded. Install a water-saving shower head and take short showers instead of baths.

Use Household Products Properly

Many products around the home can create water pollution if they are not used carefully and disposed of properly. Use the least toxic product possible. Never pour paints or solvents down the drain.

Care for Your Lawn

Landscaping with grasses, trees, and shrubs helps prevent water pollution. Plants control soil erosion and use nutrients that could otherwise enter streams. Follow directions when using fertilizers – more is not always better. Water your lawn and garden only during the early morning and evening hours.

Practice Sensible Pest Management

Not all bugs are bad. As a matter of fact, some insects help eliminate unwanted pests. Always follow directions when using pesticides and be especially careful near water and animals. Do not apply pesticides if rain is forecasted.

Control Runoff and Soil Erosion

Concrete sidewalks, streets, and driveways are unable to absorb rainfall. Runoff carries motor oil, fertilizers, and soil into storm drains and creeks. Reduce runoff by diverting downspouts onto grassed areas and using materials such as wood, bricks, or interlocking stones for patios and walkways. Control soil erosion by reseeding and mulching bare spots.

Use Car Products Wisely

Motor oil, anti-freeze and battery acid can create water pollution. Whenever possible recycle car products. For help, contact a local automotive center or the PA Recycling Hotline at 1-800-346-4242. Wash your car on the grass so water and detergents are absorbed.

Reduce Emissions and Save Energy

A large amount of the nitrogen entering comes from the air. Nitrogen oxides are emitted by burning fossil fuels. Car pool, use public transportation, and consolidate several small errands into one large trip. Turn off lights and lower the thermostat. Properly insulate your home and its heating and hot water pipes.

**For more information call the
Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc.**

at 717-238-PACD (7223)
www.pacd.org



“If an otter can’t have fun doing something, it just simply won’t do it.”

**Edward Park,
*The World of the Otter***

River otters are playful creatures. With a long, slim body, short legs, and webbed feet, they look like they were born to swim. River otters enjoy playing “tag” or sliding on their bellies over snow and mud. An otter can travel underwater at a speed of up to 6 miles per hour!!

River otters feast on fishes such as suckers, sunfishes, minnows, and crayfish. Many anglers who once feared that otters would impact fishing waters now realize their value. River otters can actually help by removing competitive fish from trout waters.

To survive, otters need clean water and healthy food chains. In the 1700s, river otters lived in freshwater rivers, streams, and lakes throughout Pennsylvania. Yet, as Europeans began establishing settlements, this critter’s population began to decline for many reasons, including unrestricted trapping. The effects created by human activities that altered and destroyed river otter habitat were lethal to these mammals.

In the 1800s, tons of eroded soil, caused by improper deforestation and agricultural practices, flowed into streams reducing the otter’s food supply. Later, during the 20th century, wetland destruction and water pollution added to the pressures on otters. Pesticides, such as DDT, industrial solvents including PCBs, and toxic metals worked up through the aquatic food web, eventually reaching the otter.

Today, Pennsylvania’s river otters are coming back because people are doing their part to protect and conserve the state’s water resources. Many voluntary and regulatory measures have been taken to help prevent water pollution. Otter recovery programs based on university researchers’ expertise, have been successful.

Otters are endearing creatures, with interests similar to ours, – Otters just want to have fun. A thriving otter population means a healthy river system with aquatic life that supports otters – and ultimately humans. An otter at play can be a reassuring sign that little changes do make a big difference. It’s important because . . .

We All Live Downstream

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