

Why Stencil our Stormwater Drains in Cambridge?

STORMWATER DRAINS BRING RAINWATER AND POLLUTION TO LOCAL WATERWAYS



Everyone values clean water, yet many people don't understand the threats from non-point pollution which is stormwater runoff, our most common cause of water pollution. Many people still mistakenly believe that industry is the greatest source of water pollution. They do not see their contribution to the problem or solution.. Rainwater and snowmelt run off streets, lawns, farms, and construction and industrial sites. This water picks up fertilizers, dirt, pesticides, oil and grease, and many other pollutants on the way to our rivers, lakes, and coastal waters. Stencils' marking our catch basins for pollution prevention can help.

Traditional regulatory controls will only go so far. Stormwater pollution from point sources and non-point sources is a challenging water quality problem. Unlike pollution from industry or sewage treatment facilities (point source pollution), stormwater pollution (non-point) is caused by the daily activities of people everywhere.

In order to provide a link between the stormwater drain system and water quality, the Cambridge Troop #56 Boy Scout project, sponsored by the City of Cambridge and Friends of Alewife Reservation is aiding a federal, state and local educational initiative to reduce the amount of non-point source pollution.

US EPA STORMWATER REQUIREMENTS




The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) explains that urban runoff discharges from stormwater drains are the number one water quality impairment nationwide. The new EPA Clean Water Act Phase II stormwater non-point rule (NPDES) recommends stormwater drain stenciling for urban areas like Alewife. Most stormwater discharges require a NPDES permit. The primary method to control stormwater discharges is the use of Best Management Practices (BMP). BMPs are both structural (e.g. deep sumped catch basins, stormwater detention basins) and non-structural (e.g. educational materials, workshops, policy guidelines) that are designed to prevent and control non-point source pollution from entering our waterways.

Dumping of solvents, used oil and toxic chemicals down stormwater drains can be a major pollution problem and threat to your business and the environment. Often it occurs because employees or customers don't realize the connection between the catch basin grates and local rivers, ponds, bay or ground water aquifer. The catch basins and stormwater drains in the Alewife area flow into the Little River/Alewife Brook which, runs from Belmont, through the Alewife Reservation to the Mystic River, and the Boston Harbor.



LOCAL PROTECTION OF STORMWATER DRAINS

The Stormwater Drain Stenciling Pilot Project is being performed by local Cambridge Boy Scout Troop #56 and is being sponsored by the City of Cambridge and the Friends of Alewife Reservation. This Pilot Program will do the following:

-  Educate the public, employees and business owners about the link between the stormwater drainage system and the Little River/Alewife Brook.
-  Help reduce pollution from the surrounding watershed from getting to the Little River/Alewife Brook.
-  Help protect local businesses from potential enforcement actions and fines from illegal dumping into stormwater drains.

YOU CAN HELP

Help protect the watershed: Your participation in protecting this watershed is essential. You can help by educating your employees on the proper ways to dispose of waste products, by stenciling the catch basins on your property, recycling, and by providing proper receptacles for disposing of trash and litter at building entrances and in parking lots.

Become involved: Join the Friends of Alewife Reservation and participate in their many stewardship projects that include Earth Day celebrations, clean-ups of the Alewife Brook and Alewife Reservation, wildlife habitat and protection projects, invasive species monitoring and control projects, and educational walks, tours and outreach efforts.



If you would like more information about ongoing efforts and projects to improve water quality you should contact the Cambridge Department of Public Works at 617 349-4800.

If you would like to join or help the Friends of Alewife Reservation in their monitoring, outreach and/or educational programs this summer, you may call (617) 547-1944 or write to FAR Box 161, 1770 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140

Stormwater Hotline:

Report illegal dumping into catch basins or dirty looking discharges from outfalls to the DPW by calling (617) 349-4800 or (617) 349-4846, or by e-mail to: TheWorks@cambridgema.gov

*This Project has been developed by Tano Holmes,
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*This brochure has been prepared by:
Cambridge Department of Public Works
And
the Friends of Alewife Reservation.*



A Stormwater Drain Stenciling Pilot Program

Cambridge Department of Public Works
In cooperation with
Friends of Alewife Reservation

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