Stormwater Tip:

Urban stormwater runoff carries a wide range of pollutants including nutrients, sediments, heavy metals, bacteria, oils, and organic chemicals, all of which can harm aquatic ecosystems and human health.

Common Pollutants
Nutrients (Nitrogen and Phosphorus): These originate from fertilizers, pet waste, lawn clippings, and failing septic systems. Excess nutrients can cause algal blooms, deplete oxygen in water bodies, and produce toxins harmful to aquatic life and humans, a process known as eutrophication

Sediment: Soil, silt, clay, and organic matter from construction sites, bare soil, and eroded riverbanks are carried by runoff. Sediment clouds water, reduces sunlight penetration, smothers fish habitats, and can transport other pollutants like heavy metals

Heavy Metals: Lead, copper, zinc, cadmium, and mercury can come from vehicle brake pads, industrial activities, roofing materials, and atmospheric deposition. These metals are toxic to aquatic organisms, can bioaccumulate, and pose long-term ecological and health risks

Bacteria and Pathogens: Stormwater can carry bacteria from pet waste, leaking sewer lines, and other organic sources, which can contaminate water and pose health risks to humans and animals

Oils, Grease, and Chemicals: Vehicle oils, industrial chemicals, and household products like soaps and detergents are washed into storm drains, contaminating waterways and affecting aquatic life

Organic Chemicals and Emerging Contaminants: Urban runoff can contain polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), pesticides, pharmaceuticals, personal care products, and other bioactive chemicals. These substances may have toxic effects on aquatic organisms and can persist in the environment

Chloride and Road Salts: In colder climates, road salts contribute chloride to runoff, which is toxic to fish and plants and accumulates over time in water bodies