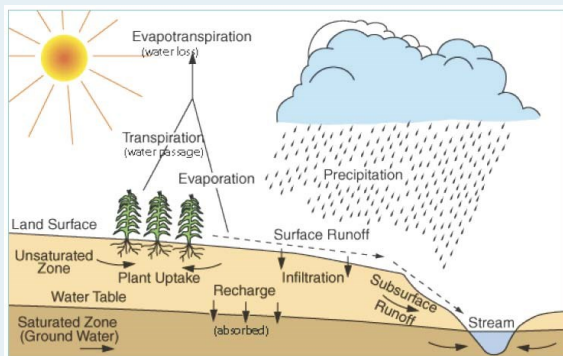


Where Does Our Water Come From?

Precipitation (rain and snow) is the primary source of water for recharging groundwater. Groundwater provides water to creeks and rivers like the Arkansas, Little Arkansas, and the Ninnescah and the Cheney Reservoir all of which are surface waters. The Reservoir provides at least 50% of the surface water available for public use. The State determines the amount of surface and groundwater that can be used (appropriated) without impacting flows in the rivers. The amount of surface water available annually from the Little Arkansas, Ninnescah, and the Cheney Reservoir is approximately 572,000 acre-feet. An acre-foot is one foot deep water over one acre of area.



Stormwater Management

Sedgwick County is 2,000 square miles in size with a population of close to 500,000 people. The County crosses eight watersheds within the Lower Arkansas and Walnut River Basins with the most notable rivers being the Arkansas and Little Arkansas Rivers. Drainage throughout the County is by way of the Arkansas River and its tributaries including Big Slough, Cowskin Creek, and the Ninnescah.

Specific goals of Sedgwick County's Stormwater Management Program include:

- Minimize threats to life, property, and infrastructure from flooding.
- Make investments to avoid future taxpayer liability.
- Build public support for actions, activities, and behaviors that lead to the protection of water resources.
- Enhance quality of life for citizens throughout Sedgwick County.
- Protect environmental quality.

Stormwater Management

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Preventing Pet Waste Pollution In Our Waterways

How pet droppings cause harm, and ways we can help maintain healthy waterways in Sedgwick County and beyond.



*Sedgwick County...
working for you*



Image credit: bewaterfriendly.com

What is a Watershed?

Watersheds are areas of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it funnels into the same place. Not only does water run into the streams and rivers from the surface of the watershed, but water also filters through the soil, and some of this water eventually drains into the same streams and rivers. Every small watershed drains to a larger one until eventually, the water—and any pollutants picked up along the way—reaches the ocean. Every watershed supports a wide variety of plants and wildlife, so it is critical that we all do our part to protect them from pollution. Read more about watersheds by visiting SedgwickCounty.org/environment/watersheds.

How Pet Waste Enters A Watershed

How we use and maintain the land in the watershed directly affects water quality for our downstream neighbors.

The majority of all water quality pollution does not come from the end of a pipe, but from parking lots, farms, communities, and even our very own backyards. The water that runs across our watersheds inadvertently transports pollutants such as excess nutrients, bacteria, oils/gases, and sediments which impair our Kansas waters. These pollutants are known as ‘Nonpoint Source Pollution’ and are the leading cause of water pollution in the United States today. They are called nonpoint source pollutants because they originate not from a single defined source but many diffuse sources.

Common Pet Waste Pathogens

When pet waste is disposed of improperly, stormwater runoff carries it—and any bacteria or parasites contained in the waste—down storm drains and into our streams, lakes, and rivers. Bacteria like salmonella, and parasites like toxoplasma and roundworms can then be passed to humans via activities like gardening, watersports and outdoor play.



Toxoplasma, roundworm, and salmonella are all found in pet waste, and can be harmful to humans.

How You Can Help

Whether at home or away, there are many ways you can help prevent pet waste-based pollution in our streams, lakes and rivers. Read on to learn more about proper disposal of pet waste both at home and away.

Tips For The Home

- Pick up pet waste from your yard. It is not a fertilizer.
- Bag the pet waste, including cat litter, before placing it in your garbage can.
- Do not put pet waste in your compost bin.
- Feces may be flushed, as long as nothing else (paper towels, cat litter, etc.) is flushed with it.

Tips For Away From Home

- Carry disposable bags while walking your dog. Reuse old grocery bags, bread bags, etc. for an even bigger impact.
- Tie a bag to your leash so you’re never unprepared.
- Avoid letting your pet do their business within 200 feet of a water body.
- When using public amenities like dog parks and walking trails, identify nearby pet waste disposal stations. Pet waste bags are often provided as a courtesy for guests.