



Conduct a Rainy Day Survey to Identify Runoff Problems on Your Property

You can identify runoff-problem areas on your property by conducting a Rainy Day Survey. Simply observe your land during a heavy rainstorm and note the problem areas. Use the checklist below to help you detect problem areas. The map you create will provide a bird's-eye view of your existing property and will provide a place to sketch new landscaping ideas. Visit our Site Maps in Chapter 5 for ideas.

1. Create a Map of Your Property

- Outline the footprint of large structures (house, patio/deck, garage, storage sheds, gazebo, dog-house), vehicle areas (driveway, parking spots), activity areas (beach, dock, canoe launch, playground, pool, horseshoe pit, gardens) and other areas of importance (paths, walkways).
- Use an assessor's map if possible, because it may already show the location and size of buildings.
- Outline large trees and other areas of vegetation.

2. Get Your Rain Gear Out

With map in hand, conduct your survey once the ground is soaked and water has saturated the soil and leaf litter. It is then that runoff is more easily observed. We suggest that you start at the water's edge and work your way inland. Where does stormwater flow? Does it all flow towards the lake? Does some of it flow elsewhere, like into the town storm drain system? Mark the pathways of runoff to their final destination. Use this checklist to help you survey your land and map your problem areas.

In the water along shore

Mark these on your map:

- Sandy or muddy deposits in the water. The sand or mud has been transported by runoff, so mark the pathway it followed to get there.
- Eroding bank
- Discharge pipes. Identify the origin of the discharge and mark the pathway it followed, if possible. Note color of discharge from pipe (if any).

On land

Mark these on your map:

- Sandy or muddy deposits. Mark the pathway the sand or mud followed to get there.
- Bare unvegetated patches
- Ditches or gullies
- Pathways, boat launches, driveways
- Drain spout for roof runoff. How far does the runoff travel? Is it channelized? If so, mark its path.
- Discharge pipes. Identify the origin of the discharge and mark the path way if followed, if possible. Note color of discharge from pipe (if any).
- Areas of gas, oil, or other vehicle leaks
- Areas waterfowl frequent
- Arrows to show direction of runoff



3. Evaluate Your Problem Areas and Consider New Ideas

Using your map, look at your problem areas and consider ways to fix them.

- Plant a vegetated buffer along your shoreline (of course!) to filter and disperse runoff.
- Revegetate bare and eroded areas.
- Create berms or plant vegetated buffers around hard surfaces.
- Replace concrete or blacktop surfaces with "porous pavement," such as bricks or stones that allow some infiltration through the cracks.
- Install a dry well or rain barrel to capture roof runoff.
- Replace dirt pathways with grassed ways.
- Eliminate direct discharges and redirect runoff through vegetated areas.
- Relocate sediment-generating areas such as pathways, driveways and gardens as far away from the water's edge as possible.
- Relocate pollution-generating areas such as fertilizing, car washing, pet walking (and pooping) as far away from the water's edge as possible.
- Replace a portion of your beach area with vegetation.



4. Prioritize Your Problems for Corrective Action.

Problems that directly affect water quality, such as those located along the shoreline or where muddy or cloudy runoff is reaching the water body, should be ranked highest on your list. This includes runoff traveling in ditches, gullies and storm drain systems.