

# WATERFRONT WISDOM — HEALTHY HABIT # 1: MINIMIZE STORM WATER RUNOFF FROM YOUR PROPERTY

As a waterfront homeowner, you have a unique opportunity to contribute to the health of your local waterway. Many activities we conduct near the waterfront, in our lawns and gardens and around our home, impact water quality. This is even more critical to riparian homeowners because runoff doesn't have far to travel before reaching the water. We can prevent water pollution by being aware that our actions DO impact water quality. We can all make a difference by practicing Healthy Habits for Clean Water.

**CHALLENGE:** Excessive aquatic plant growth and algal blooms, decreased water clarity, low stream flows and flashy flows, degraded habitat and shoreline erosion.

**CAUSE:** Impervious surfaces (driveways, sidewalks and rooftops) and loss of natural vegetation increase surface water runoff and reduce infiltration of water into the ground.

**SOLUTION:** ADDRESS RUNOFF BEFORE IT LEAVES YOUR PROPERTY. BETTER YET, KEEP WATER ON YOUR PROPERTY FOR USE IN AREAS SUCH AS YOUR GARDEN.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

**LET IT RAIN!** Redirect downspouts away from hard, paved surfaces into vegetated areas, such as a rain garden, or into a rain barrel for later use in the garden. Rain gardens are growing in popularity because they look great and filter pollutants out of runoff allowing clean water to infiltrate and replenish groundwater supplies.



### HARVEST THE RAIN

**WATER:** Install a rain barrel which will collect runoff from rooftops when it rains or direct downspouts into garden areas. It's free water for use in the garden!

### MINIMIZE IMPERVIOUS

**SURFACES:** Use porous landscaping materials, such as brick paving stones, sand or gravel beds and mulched areas, allowing spaces where water can infiltrate around and through the materials.

### BE NATURAL:

Plant and maintain a buffer of taller vegetation (preferably Michigan native plant species) around the perimeter of your property and especially near the water to help slow runoff and provide added filtration. Native plant species are adapted to local soils, climate and environmental conditions. Native plants have extensive root systems that cut down watering needs, help infiltrate water back into the ground, minimize soil erosion and filter pollutants from runoff before leaving your property.

