



# Watershed Protection Tips for Pet Owners

## The Watershed Should Only Shed Water

The storm drain system is a vast network of gutters, pipes and open channels designed for flood control, which directs runoff – untreated – from the watershed straight into the waterways.

Polluted stormwater contaminates streams, rivers and lakes. It can kill or damage plants, fish and wildlife, and can degrade the quality of our water.

The Ventura County Community for a Clean Watershed program was established to protect Ventura County's watershed by preventing stormwater pollution.

For more information on how to keep our watersheds clean, go to [\*\*cleanwatershed.org\*\*](http://cleanwatershed.org).



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## What Is Our Watershed?

Our watershed is the total land area, including your yard, from which stormwater drains into streams, rivers or other bodies of water. In Ventura County our primary watersheds drain into the Ventura and Santa Clara Rivers, Malibu and Calleguas Creeks and the marinas and estuaries that flow into the Pacific Ocean.





## Facts About Pet Waste

Every time it rains, thousands of pounds of accumulated and untreated pet waste in Ventura County can potentially wash into storm drains and flow directly into our streams, lakes and the ocean.

Pet waste runoff includes bacteria and parasites that threaten the health of both people and wildlife, as well as create an overly rich nutrient environment, causing excess weed and algae growth.

A clean and healthy watershed is invaluable to the well-being and beauty of our community. Simple precautions can protect and preserve our watersheds.

## What Can You Do?

There are safe methods for handling and disposing of pet waste. By following these easy practices you can protect both the environment and your health.

- Pick up pet waste daily from your yard. While "organic," pet waste is not a safe fertilizer in your yard or in the watershed.



- When you walk your pet, always carry disposable bags to pick up and dispose of waste properly.



## Dispose of Dog Waste Properly

- **Put dog waste in the trash.** Wrap it carefully in a sealed bag to prevent spillage during collection.
- **Dog waste can be flushed down the toilet,** so it can be properly treated at a sewage treatment plant. Be sure not to flush the pet waste bag.

## Dispose of Cat Waste Properly

- **Put cat waste, including cat litter, in the trash.** Wrap it carefully in a sealed bag to prevent spillage during collection. Cat waste and litter should only be disposed of in the trash.
- **Do not flush cat waste** or used litter down the toilet.
- **Do not mix cat waste** or used litter into your garden soil.

Cat waste has been associated with various diseases found in marine mammals as a result of pathogens that end up in the storm drain system or are not eliminated during sewage treatment.