

## Everyday choices matter.

Maybe leaving your pet's waste lying on the ground doesn't seem important, but you could make someone else's pet, or even a child, very sick. Roundworms, hookworms, toxoplasma, E. coli, cryptosporidium and giardia are some of the disease causing organisms found in pet waste. One gram of pet waste contains millions of coliform bacteria.

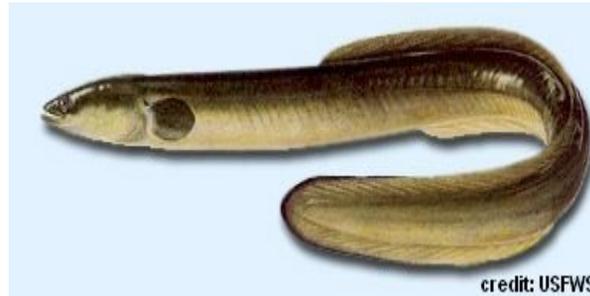


Pet waste beside the Blue River in Morsches Park.

**Polluted storm water** runoff is the biggest cause of the pollution that affects over 9,000 miles of Indiana rivers and streams. Both the Blue River and the Eel River are on the State's list of impaired waters, primarily because of polluted storm water.

**Pet waste pollutes.** Studies show that pets produce more than 1/3 of the bacterial pollution found in waterways in urban and suburban communities. High concentrations of fecal coliform bacteria have been found in urban stormwater runoff. The puddle in your backyard or neighborhood ditch is very likely polluted with fecal coliform bacteria

The American Eel



The Miami Indians named the Eel River, "Ke-na-po-co-mo-co, the river of the snake fish". A State of Indiana fisheries study from 1892 reported the American eel "...was formerly commonly found in the Blue River." Parts of the Eel River and the Blue River are listed as impaired waters of the State of Indiana due to high levels of E. coli bacteria.

**Learn more** about preventing storm water pollution by reading the City of Columbia City MS4 webpage at: [www.columbiacity.net/community/stormwater-2/](http://www.columbiacity.net/community/stormwater-2/)

Or by contacting Jon Gotz at the Whitley County Soil and Water Conservation District:  
260-244-6266 extension 3



*Please, keep it clean!*

## PREVENTING STORM WATER POLLUTION



# PET WASTE

*City of Columbia City  
Municipal Separate Storm  
Sewer System (MS4)*

*Whitley County  
Soil and Water  
Conservation District*

**Roundworm.** Roundworm infection is one of the neglected parasitic diseases targeted by the Centers for Disease Control as a priority for public health action. The most common source of roundworm infections? Pet waste!

Each year 3,000 to 4,000 serum specimens are tested by medical labs for roundworm infections. For the year ended Sept. 2010, the CDC reported 68 cases of eye disease caused by roundworm. The median age of the patients was 8-1/2 years. The majority of these patients suffered permanent vision loss.



**Hookworm.** Hookworm infection is acquired mainly by walking barefoot on contaminated sand or soil. A single pet can contaminate a large area very quickly with infective hookworm larvae. These larvae can survive for 3 to 4 weeks in the contaminated area.

Hookworm larvae burrow through and underneath the skin of an infected person. These movements, as much as several centimeters a day, leave red tracks in the skin that are intensely itchy. The condition can last for 5 or 6 weeks.

**Toxoplasmosis** is an infection caused by a microscopic parasite passed in the feces of an infected cat. The parasite can live in the environment for many months and contaminate soil, water, grass, fruits, vegetables, sandboxes, or litter boxes. Toxoplasmosis can cause severe illness in infants infected before birth (when mother become infected during pregnancy), or in persons with a weak immune system. Keep indoor cats indoors and never feed cats raw meat to help prevent infections.

**City ordinances** require persons taking a dog or a cat outside the limits of the owner's property to remove immediately any excrement deposited by the animal on any public or private property. An animal that defecates on any property other than that of its owner can be declared a public nuisance and the owner may be subject to fines and immediate impoundment of the offending animal.

**CSI for canines.** Some property managers and condominium associations now require dog owners to submit a DNA sample for their pets as a condition of leases or covenants. This makes it easy to identify and fine the owner of an offending pet. The City of Carmel, Indiana is considering requiring DNA samples for passes to use its new \$1 million dog park. As the cost of DNA testing decreases, it's possible that DNA sampling will become as widely used as microchips in identifying pets and linking them to their owners.

## HOW CAN I HELP?

- ◆ **Scoop the poop.** Scoop pet waste into a plastic bag, seal it and throw it out with the garbage.
- ◆ When you walk your pet in public areas, take your scoop and plastic bags with you. Dispose of the waste properly.
- ◆ **Don't be careless about pet waste.** Keep play areas, lawns and gardens around your home and neighborhood free of pet waste. Cover sandboxes and restrict animal access to play areas.
- ◆ Identify and avoid areas contaminated by pet waste. Teach your children to recognize and avoid contaminated areas.
- ◆ Avoid direct skin contact with potentially contaminated sand or soil. Wear shoes outdoors and wear gloves when working with soil.
- ◆ Teach children to wash their hands after playing or working with sand or soil.
- ◆ **Keep your pet healthy.** Routine veterinary care will reduce the possibility of your pet spreading infectious organisms.
- ◆ Talk to your vet about a preventive program for your pet to control worms and other parasites.