

Ripple Effect Water Minute #11 – Storm Water

Does storm water change the water quality of the Red?

Small and large urban areas must manage storm water runoff. Storm water runoff occurs when previously open land is developed into commercial or residential areas. The once “bare” ground that allowed precipitation to infiltrate is now covered with impervious surfaces such as roads and roof tops. These surfaces cause the precipitation to runoff, and the runoff is captured by open ditches or underground pipes.

This captured runoff is directed toward the nearest river system, possibly the Red River. Many types of pollutants are transported with the runoff including: sediment, automotive oils, salts, yard waste, animal waste, trash and fertilizers. The water in the storm systems is discharged into the river at a high velocity and volume.

Residents can help reduce the pollutants carried by the storm water by keeping lawn debris out of the gutter, picking up yard trash and checking to make sure harmful fluids aren't leaking from your vehicles.

Remember, what goes into the storm systems ends up in our rivers.

This Ripple Effect is brought to you by the Red River Basin Commission.