

APRIL '05 STORMWATER REPORT

“STORMWATER 101” FOR RESIDENTS

Do you know what Schuyler has in common with Clayville, Utica, Kirkland, Deerfield, Westmoreland and a dozen other communities in our area? They're all MS4s. Bet you weren't expecting that answer! So, what's an MS4?

An MS4 is a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System. It's a publicly owned storm sewer system that conveys stormwater to a creek or a lake or a wetland, rather than a sewage treatment plant. That's right ... the water that lands on the streets and the parking lots in our area flows into a series of drains called catch basins or storm grates. All of that water eventually finds its way, untreated, into tributaries of the Mohawk River including the Sauquoit Creek, the Oriskany Creek and Realls Creek.

In order to protect the water quality of our streams, the MS4 communities in the Utica Urbanized Area had to develop Stormwater Management Plans. These state mandated plans include public education and outreach activities, erosion and sediment control ordinances, and storm system mapping.

Want to help keep our streams clean? Avoid littering – garbage collects in the catch basins and can end up polluting your favorite fishing hole. Keep your car maintained – fluids that leak out of your car collect in parking lots and can be washed into the catch basins and carried to the creeks. Finally, don't dump anything like motor oil or dirt into the catch basins – remember the water in the catch basins is not filtered before it enters our creeks. For more information about the MS4 program, please contact Joanne Faulkner at 736-3334 (Oneida County Soil and Water Conservation District).