

Long Hill Environmental Commission Wants You to Contain Your Rain... But Let Your Ideas Flow

Most of Long Hill is either in the Great Swamp on the north or the lowlands of the Passaic River on the south. This makes storm water run-off a key issue for the Environmental Commission.

Unfortunately, many of us have experienced storm water problems first-hand from flooded streets, parking lots and basements. One rainy night only a few months ago I bought a sump pump at two o'clock in the morning from a plumber who had installed over one hundred sump pumps that very same day.

We all have bad news stories about stormwater runoff, but there is good news as well. The good news is that with a little effort on all our parts we can improve not only our own storm water problems, but also the quality of the Passaic River. Ultimately, our individual actions can improve the quality of our drinking water and save the Town money at the same time.

Storm water that runs into the river contains hundreds of pollutants from cars, road salts, pets and lawn care products. Storm water discharged into the sewer causes our already near capacity sewer system to process thousands of extra gallons of water. Remember, it is against the law to discharge your sump pump into the sanitary sewer.

The Passaic River Coalition has sponsored a program called *Contain Your Rain*. This program encourages people to allow the rain to filter back into the ground, thus replenishing our drinking water and decreasing runoff. Instead of sending storm water from your driveways and roofs into the streets, the sanitary sewer, or your neighbor's yard, you can contain it. Water can be contained through the use of water barrels or by building dry wells or small detention areas.

Proper landscaping is also an excellent method of containing water. Plants and trees are not only attractive, but they help soak up water and remove pollutants from runoff. Rain gardens and vegetated filter strips can be attractive additions to your home.

To learn more about the *Contain Your Rain* program, go to www.passaicriver.org, get a brochure from Town Hall, or contact us and learn more. Working together, we can solve Long Hill's growing concerns about stormwater runoff.

Containing rain is one of Long Hill Environmental Commission's concerns. What are your concerns? If you have questions or concerns about environmental issues, land use problems or if you would like to see some special program adopted in Long Hill, please let us know.

Alexandra Hennessy