

What's the Problem With Pet Waste?

Pet waste left in yards and communities' streets can have many adverse effects on the environment, as it is full of harmful bacteria and excess nutrients.

Besides the fact pet waste is a neighborhood nuisance, it can make people sick, especially children who are more likely to come into contact with it while playing. Pet waste left on lawns can also kill or damage grass and other plants.



When pet waste is washed into lakes or streams, the waste decays, uses up oxygen, and sometimes releases ammonia. This can kill fish. It also contains nutrients that encourage weed and algae growth.

Water with too many nutrients becomes cloudy and green... imagine this in your backyard pond or stream!

Managing pet waste properly is something easy that everyone can do to make a difference in the quality of our surface waters.

What goes in here ...



... comes out here.

Rainfall and snowmelt in the Wachusett Reservoir watershed goes directly into streams, rivers, and lakes untreated through the storm drain system. Along the way, it picks up contaminants on its path. That's why it is so important to make sure that pollutants such as pet waste do not end up in storm drains.

WACHUSETT RESERVOIR WATERSHED

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DOG WASTE AND SURFACE WATER QUALITY

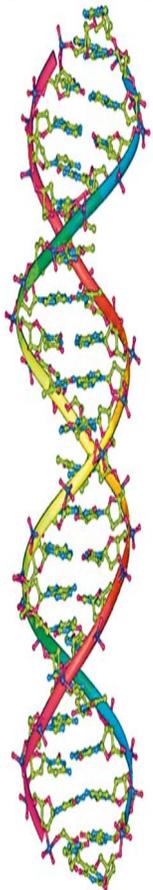
Every dog produces about $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. of solid waste per day... and about 7.8 billion fecal coliform bacteria.



When pet waste is left on the ground, rain or snowmelt carries the bacteria into surface waters, either directly or through the storm drain system, and eventually to drinking water supplies.

Microbial Source Tracking (MST)

Microbial Source Tracking is a set of techniques used to determine sources of fecal indicator bacteria in the environment. MST tests attempt to determine whether fecal bacteria are being introduced into water bodies through human, wildlife, or domestic animal sources.



DCR Division of Water Supply Protection has performed MST tests on several streams that flow to the Wachusett Reservoir. Initial results indicate that dogs are a major contributor of bacteria to these waters. **We need your help** to eliminate bacteria by picking up after your pet in your yard and while on walks.

Why Aren't Dogs Allowed On DCR Watershed Lands?*

DCR's watershed lands serve as protection for the Wachusett Reservoir, a sensitive drinking water supply for 2.5 million Massachusetts residents.

Bacteria and other parasites, such as *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium*, found in pet waste can survive for long periods when left on the ground. These can then get washed into the drinking water supply during the next storm, compromising water quality, which is regulated by state and federal laws.



*Dogs are **ONLY ALLOWED** on the portion of the Oakdale Rail Trail not owned by DCR (Thomas Street to the I-190 overpass).

Please pick up after your pet and **DO NOT** throw bagged waste into the woods!

How you can help



- ✂ **BRING IT** - Always bring a plastic bag when you walk your dog.
- ✂ **BAG IT** - Use the bag as a glove to pick up the pet waste. Scoop up the waste and turn the bag inside out around the waste.
- ✂ **DISPOSE IT** - Properly dispose the waste by placing it in a trash can or flushing it unbagged down the toilet. **NEVER THROW WASTE DOWN A STORM DRAIN!**
- ✂ **WASH YOUR HANDS.**
- ✂ **PICK UP** after your pet in your yard.
- ✂ **BRING** your dog only where dogs are allowed.