How Does Surface Runoff Affect the Watershed?

Surface runoff is water that either does not have time to sink into the ground or is produced in such quantity (e.g., floods) that the normal soaking-up process cannot take place.

Water in the form of precipitation runs off the land surface from either grass, soil, or paved areas.

The runoff may also drain from open hydrants or hoses.

Surface runoff, either from the “first flush” (the first inch of a heavy rainfall) or from water draining for a longer time (e.g., a garden hose) carries pollutants, such as motor oil or pesticides, to the waterbodies in the watershed.

Responsible actions on the part of citizens can prevent contamination in the watershed. For example, each of us could recycle used motor oil, pick up pet wastes, and properly use pesticides, fertilizers, and herbicides.