

HERO HANDBOOK

The quick and easy guide to everyday actions for clean water.

You can be a hero!



Huron
River
Watershed
Council

www.hrwc.org/h2oheroes

There are H₂O Heroes all around us — everyday people like you and me working to help protect water resources. Why not join them and get YOUR hero on? Just follow the steps below, and when you're all done, pick a superhero name that relates to what you will do for clean water. Submit it to the Huron River Watershed Council's Facebook page and we'll enter you to win one of 50 H₂O Hero t-shirts! www.facebook.com/huronriver

1 STEP 1: CLAIM YOUR SUPER POWER

Whether you're a longtime protector of our water resources or just starting out, here are some great ways to help:

Runoff Reduction

You capture runoff, preventing it from flushing into storm drains. You use deep-rooted Michigan native plants, plant a rain garden or use a rain barrel. Your downspouts are directed away from paved surfaces and onto your garden or lawn. Your patio is made of porous pavement.



Pollution Prevention

You clean paved surfaces with a broom instead of a hose, choose phosphorus-free fertilizer, and mulch grass clippings and fall leaves back into your lawn. You take household toxics and medications to disposal sites.

Water Saving / Energy Saving

You are water efficient, saving both money and energy while reducing your greenhouse gas emissions. Your showerheads, faucet aerators and toilets are certified by EPA's WaterSense program. You use smart irrigation technology to limit water use outdoors.



See: www.epa.gov/watersense

2

STEP 2: PICK A SIDEKICK



Not every hero has a sidekick, but if there's someone in your life who would love to be a hero too, go ahead and recruit one. Suggestions:

- Your dog*
- Your child or spouse
- Your neighbor or friend
- Your co-worker

* Your canine sidekick will need your help to achieve hero status. Bacteria in pet feces compromise water quality, reduce recreational opportunities, and contaminate drinking water supplies. Pick up pet waste and dispose of it in the trash to protect water quality!



3

STEP 3:

PUT BAD GUYS WHERE THEY BELONG

Which Bad Guys Will You Go After?

Dispose of household cleaners, chemicals, oil, paint, and other potential toxics responsibly. Check with your county for disposal guidelines and drop-off locations. Never pour them down storm drains, into sinks, or onto the ground.



Do not flush unused or expired medicines down the toilet or sink. Wastewater treatment facilities are not equipped to filter out drugs and personal care products. Dispose of them through a "take back" program or by wrapping containers in duct tape and several layers of plastic bags before putting them in your trash. In Washtenaw County, visit www.dontflushdrugs.com for details.



"One way I do my part is by using the least amount of household toxics possible and taking any leftovers to my county collection site for safe disposal. That way I know they stay out of our water."



4

STEP 4:

WORK FOR THE COMMON GOOD

What Will You Do That Helps Water?

Make the Call

Some people illegally dump stuff into curbside storm drains and ditches. This diverts community resources and pollutes our water.

Report dumping at
800-292-4706

Adopt a Storm Drain

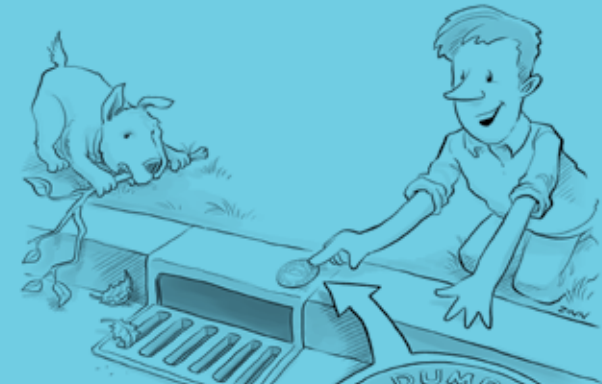
Take care of your neighborhood storm drains personally or organize a group effort to help clear debris from them and label drains with "No Dumping – Drains to River" markers.

Go to www.hrwc.org/adoptastormdrain

Volunteer

HRWC runs group stream monitoring and river cleanup events throughout the year. During River Roundup, small teams of volunteers collect and count river bugs that indicate the stream's health.

Opportunities at:
www.hrwc.org/volunteer



5

"Black-eyed Susans are my favorite Michigan native plant. Their deep roots filter polluted runoff and help keep water clean."



STEP 5:

CHOOSE YOUR COLOR

We recommend green, but we know that heroes come in all shades. Here's how to be "green" even if your costume is red or blue.

Grow a Healthy Lawn

Maintain your lawn at 3" or higher—tall grass stimulates root growth and shades out weeds. Use only phosphorus-free lawn fertilizer if needed. Phosphorus promotes harmful algae growth that kills fish and beneficial plants in our waterways. Michigan law restricts phosphorous application on residential and commercial lawns.

Plant Native Plants

Direct rainwater to deep-rooted native plants that filter runoff and channel it into the ground. A natural low spot in your yard could be the perfect place for a rain garden.



See: www.ewashtenaw.org/raingardens

Mulch Fall Leaves

Using your mower to mulch fall leaves keeps them out of the street and nearby storm drains. Or, compost leaves for next spring. By using your lawn's natural compost as fertilizer, you'll save money and energy and help protect our water. If your community's guidelines for curbside pickup direct you to put your leaves into the street, wait until just before collection day to do so.

6

STEP 6:

SELECT HERO GEAR

Where would Batman be without the Batmobile, or Wonder Woman without her invisible plane or golden lasso? Ideas for gear that protects water quality:

- Superhero Mask
- H₂O Hero T-shirt
- Mulching Lawn Mower
- Broom
- Rain Barrel
- Pooper Scooper
- WaterSense Labeled Showerhead
- High Efficiency Toilet
- Cape
- Cuffs
- Stretchy Pants
- Earth Friendly Deicer
- Michigan Native Plants and a Shovel



7

FINAL STEP!

COME UP WITH

YOUR HERO NAME

A hero needs a clever, catchy name. When you've got it, "Like" HRWC's Facebook page and tell us what your hero name is. We'll enter you to win one of 50 H₂O Hero t-shirts!

www.facebook.com/huronriver

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

- To report a hazardous spill, call your local fire department **9-1-1**
- To report illegal dumping or other environmental pollution concerns, call the MDEQ Pollution Emergency Alert System **800-292-4706**

LIVINGSTON COUNTY

www.livgov.com

Department of Public Works
517-546-7150

Drain Commissioner
517-546-0040

Home Toxics Reduction/
Solid Waste Program
517-545-9609

MSU Extension Horticulture
Hotline
517-546-3950

Recycle Livingston
www.recyclelivingston.org
517-548-4439

Road Commission
www.livingstonroads.org
517-546-4250

WASHTENAW COUNTY

www.ewashtenaw.org

Environmental Health
Department
734-222-3800

Water Resources Commissioner
734-222-6860

Home Toxics Reduction Program
734-222-3950

MSU Extension Garden Hotline
734-997-1819

Road Commission,
www.wcroads.org
734-761-1500

CITY OF ANN ARBOR

www.a2gov.org

Recycle Ann Arbor
734-662-6288

Solid Waste Information
734-994-2807

Water Utilities Customer
Service Center
734-994-2666

CITY OF BRIGHTON

www.brightoncity.org

Department of Public Services
810-225-8001

CITY OF CHELSEA

www.city-chelsea.org

734-475-1771

CITY OF YPSILANTI

www.cityofypsilanti.com

Department of Public Services
734-483-1421

VILLAGE OF BARTON HILLS

www.vil-bartonhills.org

Jan Esch, Deputy Clerk
734-222-5209

VILLAGE OF DEXTER

www.villageofdexter.org

Department of Public Works
734-426-8530

Utilities Department
734-426-4572

Wellhead Protection Coordinator
734-426-8303 ext. 15

Village Offices
734-426-8303

VILLAGE OF PINCKNEY

www.villageofpinckney.org

734-878-6206

GREEN OAK CHARTER TOWNSHIP

www.greenoaktwp.com

810-231-1333

MARION TOWNSHIP

www.mariontownship.com

517-546-1588

PITTSFIELD CHARTER TOWNSHIP

www.pittsfield-mi.gov

Information
734-822-3101

Utilities
734-822-3105
734-822-4911 (after-hour
emergencies)

Parks and Recreation
734-822-2120

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF YPSILANTI

www.ytown.org

734-544-4000

ANN ARBOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

www.aaps.k12.mi.us

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

www.emich.edu

HURON RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

www.hrwc.org

734-769-5123