



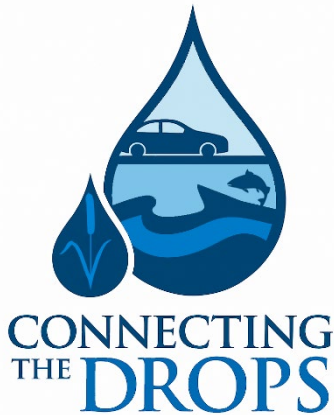
## CONNECTING THE DROPS

### The New York State Thruway Authority: Working with You to Protect Clean Water

#### The Connecting the Drops Campaign

*Connecting the Drops* is a public outreach campaign of the New York State Thruway (NYSTA). The goal of this outreach is to remind New Yorkers that water connects us all, and that what is dropped in the environment can reach water bodies and put aquatic life, recreation and even drinking water at risk. The *Connecting the Drops* effort includes educating Authority employees, contractors, and everyone who uses the Thruway.

Everyone depends on clean water and therefore has a responsibility to keep it clean. To protect clean water, an understanding of how pollution can reach the rivers, lakes, and streams of our state is needed, along with an understanding of what everyone in our watersheds can do to prevent pollution. NYSTA is working to prevent pollution from its roads and facilities, and an important part of this effort is education. If the New York public understands the importance of working together to prevent pollution – especially non-point source pollution – from reaching waterways, this effort can be successful.



#### Q. What is a watershed?

**A.** A watershed is an area of land where all the water that falls in it and drains off it goes to the same place. For example, all water in the Hudson River watershed would eventually flow into the Hudson River. The entire Hudson River watershed is 13,400 square miles.

#### Q. What is the water cycle?

**A.** The water cycle is the system by which water moves through the environment. Water is collected and redistributed through several processes: precipitation (rain, snow); infiltration and percolation into soil; transpiration (moved through roots, plants, and into atmosphere); evaporation; and condensation.

#### Q. What is the difference between point source and non-point source pollution?

**A.** Point-source pollution generally comes from the wastewater discharged from the pipes of industrial facilities and municipal sewage treatment plants into rivers, streams, lakes, and the ocean. Non-point source pollution enters the environment from a widespread area that is not clearly defined. Rather than coming from the end of a pipe, non-point source pollution comes from storm runoff (rain, snow) from parking lots, city streets, farmland, even your own yard. It can contain oils, spilled chemicals, pesticides, fertilizers, sewage, or litter.

#### Q. How does stormwater get contaminated?

**A.** When water flows through a watershed it can carry any pollution that it picks up along the way. This means that pollution spilled or dropped in a parking lot or on the ground can reach a river or stream some distance away.

#### Q. What can I do to prevent contamination of stormwater?

**A.** The simple answer is to keep anything that *isn't* stormwater from entering stormwater runoff. Clean up spilled oil, grease, or chemicals, minimize or eliminate the use of pesticides and fertilizer, and pick up litter and debris, including pet waste.

#### Q. How does the NYSTA work to prevent stormwater pollution?

**A.** A federal regulation requires permits for stormwater discharges from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s), which includes the New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA). Under this permit, NYSTA implements a system-wide stormwater management program that includes public education and outreach; public participation; detection and elimination of all illicit discharges; construction site runoff control; post-construction runoff control; and pollution prevention. NYSTA is working hard to help protect clean water.

Part of the Thruway is located in the Onondaga Lake watershed, near the city of Syracuse, which is subject to special pollution control efforts to revitalize the contaminated lake. NYSTA is helping to minimize or eliminate sediment, nutrients and other polluted runoff that goes to the lake. NYSTA ensures that its stormwater infrastructure is functioning properly, erosion and sediment controls are implemented on construction projects, fertilizers are not used, and paved areas are swept annually.