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Penobscot Indian Nation
 Department of Natural Resources
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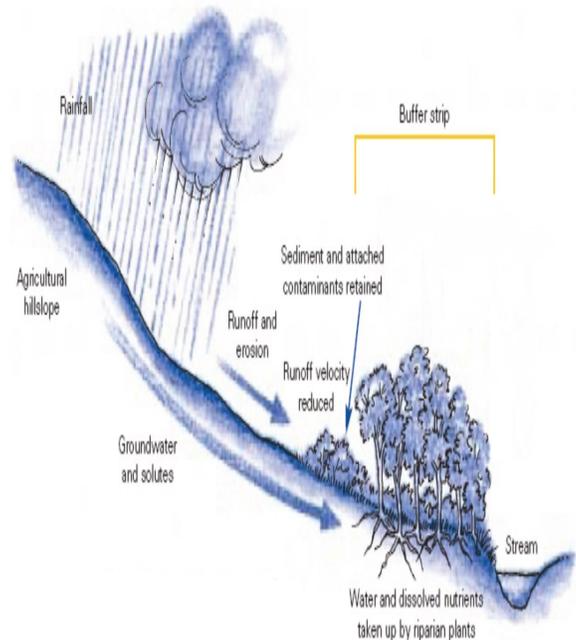
NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION

What is it? What has the Tribe done to address it? How can I help prevent it?

By: Jason Mitchell

What is nonpoint source pollution?

Spring is here and as the winter's snow and ice slowly melt I thought it would be a good time to talk about nonpoint source (NPS) pollution. Unlike point source pollution that comes from sewage treatment plants and various industries, nonpoint source pollution comes from many diffused sources. NPS pollution by definition is stormwater (rainfall and snowmelt) that runs over and through the land picking up natural and man-made pollutants. These pollutants are then deposited into our streams, lakes, rivers, and finally the ocean. The types of pollutants that enter waterways vary according to land use. In residential and agricultural areas



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they can be animal wastes, faulty septic systems, excess fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides as well as bacteria and nutrients from livestock. In urban and industrial areas the pollutants can be oils, grease, toxic chemicals, and salt used on roads during the winter months. We can also have nutrient enriched sediment enter our waterways from improperly managed construction sites, crop lands, forest lands, and from eroding streambanks. Another way nonpoint source pollution enters our water ways is through atmospheric deposition and hydromodification. Nonpoint source pollution, in many states, is the leading remaining cause of water quality problems.

What has the Tribe done to address nonpoint source pollution?

The P.I.N. Water Resources Program has installed many Best Management Practices or BMP’s over the years to prevent nonpoint source pollution from entering Tribal waterways. One of the most visible BMPs on the reservation is the rip-rap

rock walls that have been installed on Indian Island riverbanks. This specific BMP was selected due to erosion from the spring thaw ice flows and fluctuating water levels within the Milford Impoundment. The rip-rap has now armored the banks preventing any further erosion and has stopped sediments from



entering the river. A road-salt shed was constructed on Indian Island to prevent road-salt from entering Penobscot waters. Other BMP’s include improved stream crossings and ditching on unimproved logging roads within

most tribal trustlands. We improved access and reduced sediment from entering Mattamiscontis Lake by installing flexible razor-strip stormwater diverters, proper ditching, and new cross drainage culverts. The flexible razor-strips were installed on steep sections of the road leading to the lake to divert stormwater into ditches and prevent road erosion.



This summer PIN Water Resources Program will be installing new BMP's to the Snow Mountain ATV trail. Work was performed on this trail ten years ago. Before that work was done ATVs traveled directly in stream crossings. To address this issue 5 bridges and many water bars were constructed. These BMPs have served their purpose well for the last decade, but the bridges have become unsafe and

water bars are sediment filled. So, through an EPA Tribal NPS grant we will be hiring a contractor to install 5 new bridges with steel carrying beams, new water bars, and flexible razor strip stormwater diverters. We will re-route the upper portion



of this trail and retire and stabilize the old trail. These and many other Best Management Practices on tribal lands help reduce nonpoint source pollution from entering Penobscot waters.

What can I do to prevent nonpoint source pollution?

We all can play a role in our day to day actions to prevent nonpoint source pollution. We can for example:

- Apply lawn and garden chemicals sparingly and according to directions.
- Dispose of used oil, antifreeze, paints and other household chemicals properly – not in sewer or stormwater drains!
- Keep litter, pet wastes, leaves and debris out of street gutters and storm drains. These outlets drain directly to the river!
- Control soil erosion on your property by planting ground cover and stabilizing erosion-prone areas. Minimize bare soil!
- Purchase household detergents and cleaners that are low in phosphorous to reduce the amount of nutrients discharged into the river.

As summer approaches we can look forward to getting out on our tribal lands! Remember that together we can make a difference in our environment and prevent NPS pollution!

For more information on NPS pollution you can contact me directly at 207-817-7381 or e-mail me at jason.mitchell@penobscotnation.org