

## USE & DISPOSAL OF WASTE

There are several options to choose from to manage equine waste.

- **Compost** soiled bedding and manure.
- **Donate** composted material to local greenhouses, nurseries and botanical parks.
- **Transport manure to composting centers** or topsoil companies.
- **Dispose** of horse waste via your local waste hauler.

## GROOMING ALTERNATIVES

Chemicals used during horse grooming may cause adverse health effects to humans and are also toxic to aquatic life.

- **Use less-toxic alternatives for grooming.** Even biodegradable products can be harmful to humans, aquatic life and the environment.
- **Follow instructions** on product labels and clean up spills.
- When washing horses, **DO NOT** let washwater enter the storm drain or any waterbodies – either allow washwater to seep into the ground or wash in an area that is routed to the sanitary sewer.
- **Conserve water** by using a spray nozzle with an automatic shut-off or turn off the water or kink the hose when not in use.

## FACILITY DESIGN & PLACEMENT

New facilities should be designed to address water quality concerns. If you are constructing or upgrading a stable, check with the County Planning and Building Department for information about facility design.

## REPORT STORMWATER POLLUTION

Call the County Stormwater Pollution Hotline at:

**(805) 781-5544**



**REMEMBER, *YOU* are the Solution to Stormwater Pollution!**

**For More Information**

visit our website at:

[www.slocounty.ca.gov/pw/stormwater.htm](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/pw/stormwater.htm)



**County of San Luis Obispo  
Stormwater Management Program**

**Is your horse contributing to stormwater pollution?**



**Horse Owners Guide to Water Quality Protection**

**Help Prevent Water Pollution!**

## EQUESTRIAN ACTIVITIES & WATER QUALITY

The equestrian lifestyle is a great way to live. However, the effects of having horses on one's property can be far reaching and have a harmful effect upon our local water quality.



The useful tips and suggestions outlined in this brochure are intended to help prevent water pollution caused by equestrian activities. These tips will cover the following topics:

- Pasture/Stall Management
- Storage of Waste
- Use and Disposal of Waste
- Grooming Alternatives
- Facility Design and Placement

## WHAT'S IN HORSE WASTE?

Although **horse wastes** (manure, urine and soiled bedding) are organic, biodegradable materials, many of their physical, biological and chemical properties (such as sediment, phosphorous, nutrients, salts, ammonia and bacteria and viruses) **can be detrimental to water quality**, adversely affecting human health and aquatic life in local water bodies.

Many of the nutrients ingested by horses return to the environment in feces and urine. **When carried by runoff to streams and lakes**, excessive amounts of these same nutrients **can kill aquatic life**.

Bacteria, such as **fecal coliform (*E. coli*)**, are present in horse manure. Fecal coliform is a pollutant of concern in our local creeks and ocean.

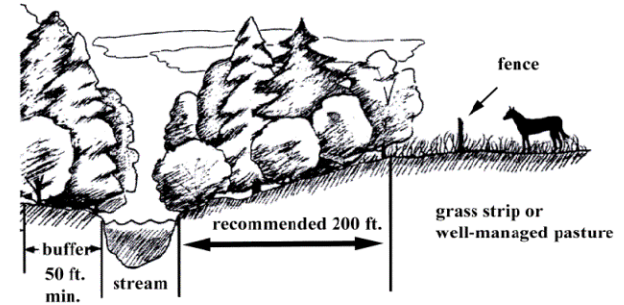
High levels of fecal coliform are often the **cause of local beach closures**.



## PASTURE / STALL MANAGEMENT

Horse wastes are not the only source of pollution horses generate. Some activities, such as heavy grazing or pasture use, remove the soil's vegetative cover and can expose the soil surface. Exposed soil is easily transported by runoff to streams and creeks. Excessive sediment can fill pools, smother aquatic habitats, and cover food supplies. Limiting horse access to waterways can reduce a horse's impact to water quality, both from waste and soil erosion.

- **Direct deposit of manure into waterways can harm aquatic life.** Design stream crossings or **use exclusionary fencing** to keep horses out of waterways. (Stream crossings may require state or federal permits – please contact your local planning department).
- **Keep horses away from streams**, flood-prone areas and steep hillsides to reduce the potential for runoff of manure and sediment.
- **MANURE AND SOILED BEDDING SHOULD BE REMOVED WEEKLY**, especially during the rainy season.
- Trampling physically breaks down streambanks and destroys vegetative cover. **Plant vegetation along streambanks** to help filter sediments and horse waste before they enter waterways.



\* use native species if possible

- Establish and maintain healthy pastures with at least three inches of leafy material.
- Manage grazing by controlling the number of horses and the amount of time they spend on a pasture.

## STORAGE OF WASTE

Animal keeping operations shall not allow sedimentation (soil, manure, other waste) to enter any drainage channel (County Code Section 22.30.090.G.2 Animal Keeping - Erosion and Sedimentation Control).

- **Store horse waste in a sturdy, seepage-free unit** that is enclosed or under cover (a roof or tarp).
- **Store waste piles on an impervious surface** (a concrete pad or plastic tarp).
- **Locate storage areas away from waterways** and use **buffer strips of vegetation** to filter sediments and absorb nutrients in runoff.
- **Do not dump** horse waste on the edge or directly into stream channels.

**Never allow horse waste or care products to enter the creeks, streets or storm drains.**