

Identify Causes of Water Pollution

Does what people do on land affect water? Find out in the graphic below.

Some Sources of Water Pollution

1 Leaky sewers and septic tanks: If sewers or septic tanks leak, bacteria can be released into groundwater and the water supply.

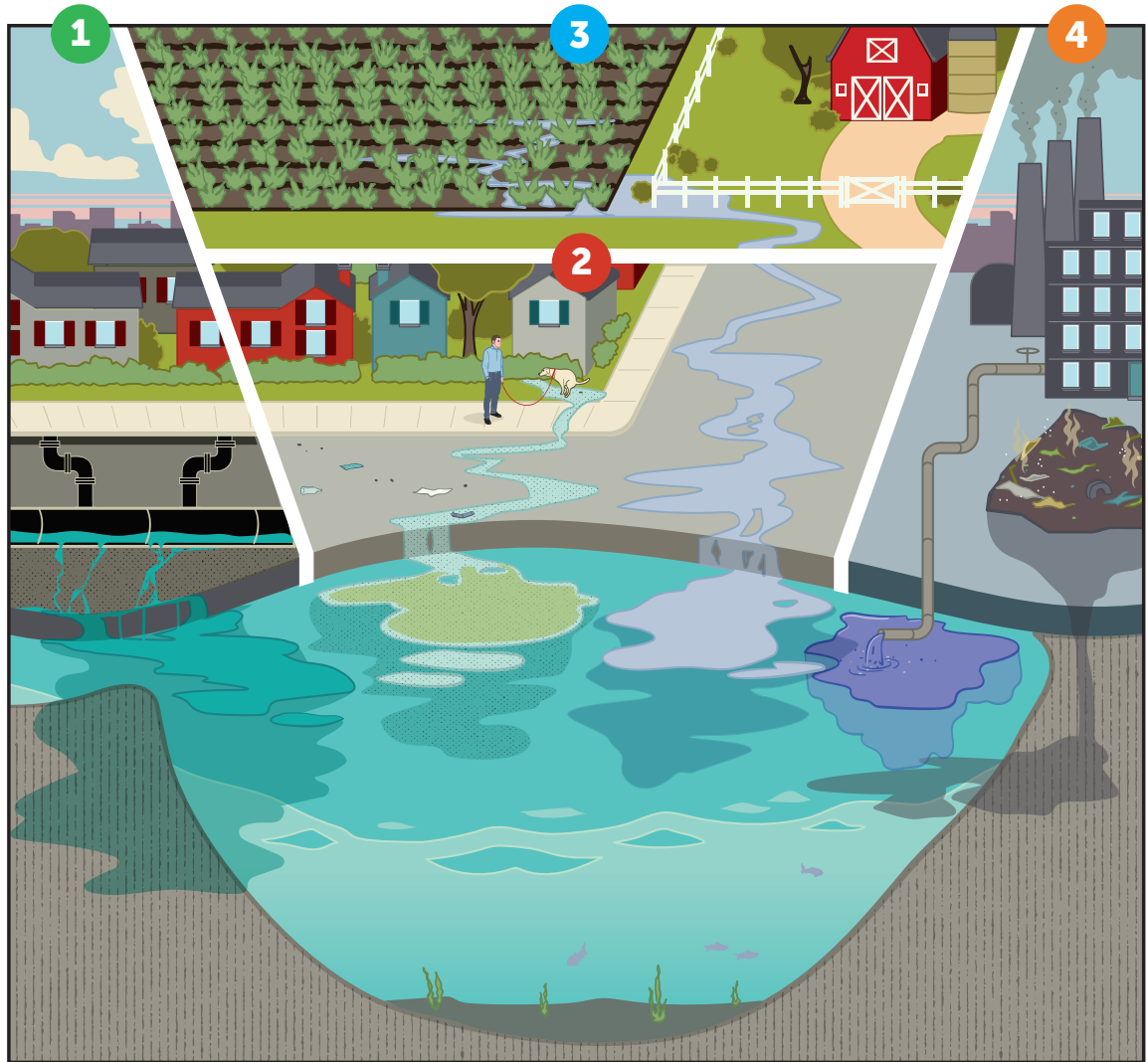
2 Stormwater: Rainwater picks up trash, bacteria, and nitrogen from pet waste and chemicals as it travels over the ground—bringing these pollutants to lakes, rivers, and oceans.

Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs):

In a combined sewer, one pipe carries stormwater AND wastewater from homes. Usually, this water flows to a wastewater treatment plant to be treated (cleaned) and released into waterways. But when too much rain overwhelms the combined sewer, untreated wastewater may flow directly into bodies of water.

Separate Sewer Systems:

In a separate sewer system, stormwater is not treated. Stormwater runoff picks up pollution, flows into pipes, and is released directly to nearby waterbodies.



3 Agriculture: Rain and irrigation can pick up chemicals from pesticides and nitrogen from fertilizer on farmland (or lawns) and carry it into nearby waterbodies.

4 Industrial wastewater: Wastewater from manufacturing can also contribute to water pollution.