

# saving\_our\_streams\_02

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

grease, blockage, pipe, plant, drain, problem, streams, raw sewage, sewage treatment plant, breaks, water, shower, pour, clean, sewer bills, line, caustic chemical, heavy rains, dishes, treatment

## SPEAKERS

Jim Willburn, Child, Norm Uhl, Gary Syzek

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Norm Uhl 00:00

What we put down our drains can have a major impact on our streams. It can also increase our sewer bills. Think for instance about all the clean water we force sewage treatment plants to treat needlessly when we leave the faucet running. In part two of this series, you will learn that you can improve water quality by simply watching your waste line. The way you clean up after cooking, wash your clothes, and even shower can contribute to the release of raw sewage into our streams. If you could take a trip down your drain, you'd see why. Remember all that hamburger and bacon grease you poured down the kitchen drain, there it is that white stuff sticking to the top of the pipe. And it will only get worse. There's some more up ahead about to cause a blockage that could cause sewage to back up into your home or through a manhole where it will run off into the nearest stream. Grease also increases the maintenance cost of your local sewage treatment plant. Cleaning out clogged pipes and repairing broken pumps isn't cheap. And guess who ends up paying for it. The same person who ends up paying for the removal of grease from the treatment system. It ends up in a landfill and you could accomplish the same thing for a whole lot less money than using a vacuum truck. All you have to do is pour it in a can and put it out with the garbage. This simple lifestyle change will save your utility district a lot of money whether the plant is large or small. The number one maintenance problem is grease.

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Gary Syzek 01:42

The grease will harden and form blockages inside of the main line. And the end result is a sewer stoppage. We just have a situation right here as we speak. Looking down into that 12 inch line we've got a huge grease blockage that is partially blocking the flow. If the grease will gather more grease particles, then that blockage will get bigger and bigger. And before you know it there'll be no flow whatsoever going through the line.

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Norm Uhl 02:07

Of course the maintenance bill is paid by the customers and the taxpayers but then many of

them caused the problem in the first place. And there are even more costs to come. We haven't even talked about what it does to your pipes.

J Jim Willburn 02:19

And we have a good example here of a pipe that we recently replaced and if you'll notice this gunk is grease that came out of the sink line. People have a tendency to want to use a hard caustic chemical to get rid of this problem. And when the caustic starts coming down, it starts clearing out the bottom and when it does it eats away the pipe also.

N Norm Uhl 02:36

Willburn says the best way to clean out the grease is to use a biological drain treatment. These use enzymes and special bacteria cultures that eat the grease and not your pipes. Another problem for treatment plants, especially small ones is volume. On rainy days rainwater infiltrates through breaks and sewer pipes and through residential clean outs that don't have lids.

C Child 02:59

Thank you.

N Norm Uhl 03:00

Add to that a lot of people stuck indoors who all decide to wash dishes or laundry or shower at the same time and a small plant can easily be overwhelmed. This can be the result. This is an aerial picture of an overloaded plant releasing raw sewage into a stream. To help prevent this you can avoid doing laundry and dishes during heavy rains. It's also a good idea to only use water when you need it. Don't leave the kitchen tap running continuously. And while you're waiting for the shower water to warm up, collect that water and use it on your household plants. Better to use it on these plants than to run it through a plant like this. In the long run, it will save you money while at the same time saving our streams.