American Water Newsroom

‘Paws’ and Protect our Water!

New Jersey American Water Advocates for Responsible Pet Waste Disposal to Protect Water Quality

CAMDEN, N.J. – July 30, 2024 – As the summer weather brings more opportunities to enjoy time with our pets, New Jersey American Water is asking all pet owners to take a moment to ‘paws’ and protect our water! Animal waste disposal is often overlooked, but the company is reminding pet owners that its harmful properties can cause pollution in creeks, rivers, and lakes if not handled properly. These pet waste pointers can help New Jerseyans and their furry friends be sure that our bodies of water remain free from pollution.

“Pet waste isn’t just an annoyance to your shoe. It also impacts the water quality of surrounding waterways,” said Laura Norkute, Director of Water Quality and Environmental Compliance at New Jersey American Water. “When not disposed of properly, pet waste introduces harmful nutrients and pathogens into our source water. This not only affects source water quality but also makes drinking water treatment more challenging and costly. The best defense is to consistently clean up after your pets do their business and to dispose of their waste in garbage bins.”

New Jersey American Water provides the following tips for disposing of pet waste properly:

- Bag it, bin it. Carry a plastic bag on every walk with your pet. You can even use compact, refillable bag dispensers that attach to your dog’s leash. After picking the waste up, dispose of it in the nearest trash can -- never in a stormdrain!
- Boundaries during business. Ensure your pet does their business at least 200 feet away from any water body.
- Bark for bags. Take advantage of courtesy bags and disposal boxes provided in many parks and recreational areas. If your park doesn’t already have these, ask your town to install them!

"Summer is a great time for fun with our pets, but when dogs do their duty, we can’t forget our duty to the environment," said Norkute. "It’s simple to pick up after our pets; by doing so, we can contribute to cleaner water bodies for everyone!"

For more information regarding pet waste management, visit the Environmental Protection Agency’s website at epa.gov. Additional watershed protection tips can be found on New Jersey American Water’s watershed protection webpage.

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