

# Brown Water, Green Weeds



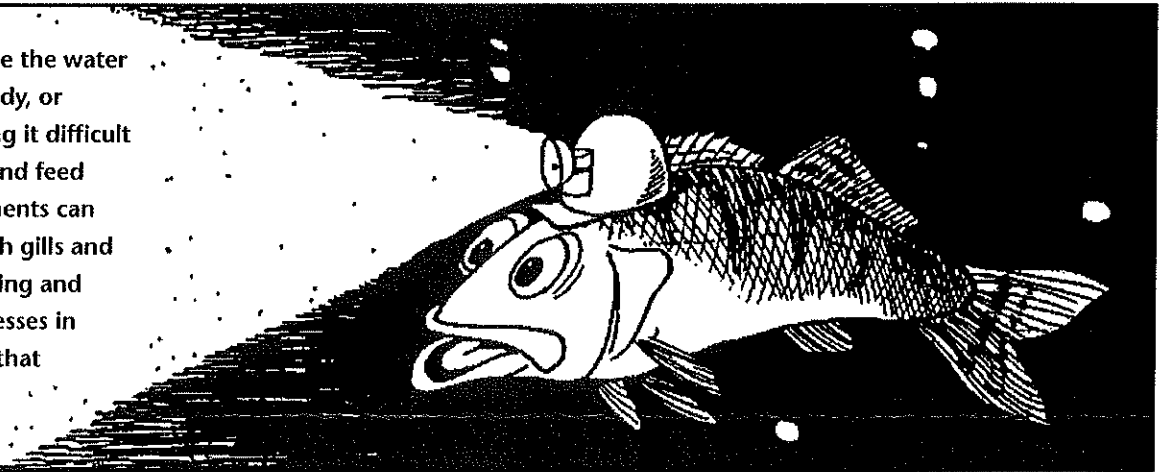
## Familiar Signs of Runoff Pollution

Whenever rain falls or snow melts, water flows across farm fields and city streets and washes soil particles, pesticides, pet wastes, oil and other pollutants into lakes and streams. This process is called nonpoint source or runoff pollution. The symptoms of runoff pollution are all-too-familiar: weed-choked lakes, muddy rivers that flood frequently, and an over-abundance of carp in our favorite fishing holes. Sediments and nutrients cause many of the problems we see in streams and lakes.

### *Sediments*

Sediments are soil particles eroded from construction sites, streambanks and cropland. Sediments also include dirt, flakes of metal, and small pieces of broken pavement washed off city streets. When these particles reach lakes and streams they do more than turn the water brown.

- ▶ Sediments cause the water to become cloudy, or "turbid," making it difficult for fish to see and feed properly. Sediments can also damage fish gills and impair the feeding and breathing processes in aquatic insects that fish eat.



- ▶ Many fish and aquatic insects lay their eggs on gravel beds. When sediments are deposited on the stream bottom they cover this spawning habitat. They also destroy a stream's natural "riffle and pool" pattern, producing a slow-moving, muddy, less attractive stream.

