

Disconnecting downspouts to reduce runoff

Buncombe clean water fund

Renee Fortner, M.S., Director of programs

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RiverLink's Mission

RiverLink promotes the environmental and economic vitality of the French Broad River Watershed.



Source: Renee Fortner

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Clean water for Buncombe

- **96 miles** of impaired streams in Buncombe County (2022 NC 303-d List)
- Watershed actions plans have identified **stormwater runoff** as a primary cause of impairment for Smith Mill Creek, Upper Swannanoa, Central Asheville Watershed streams.

Source: Renee Fortner

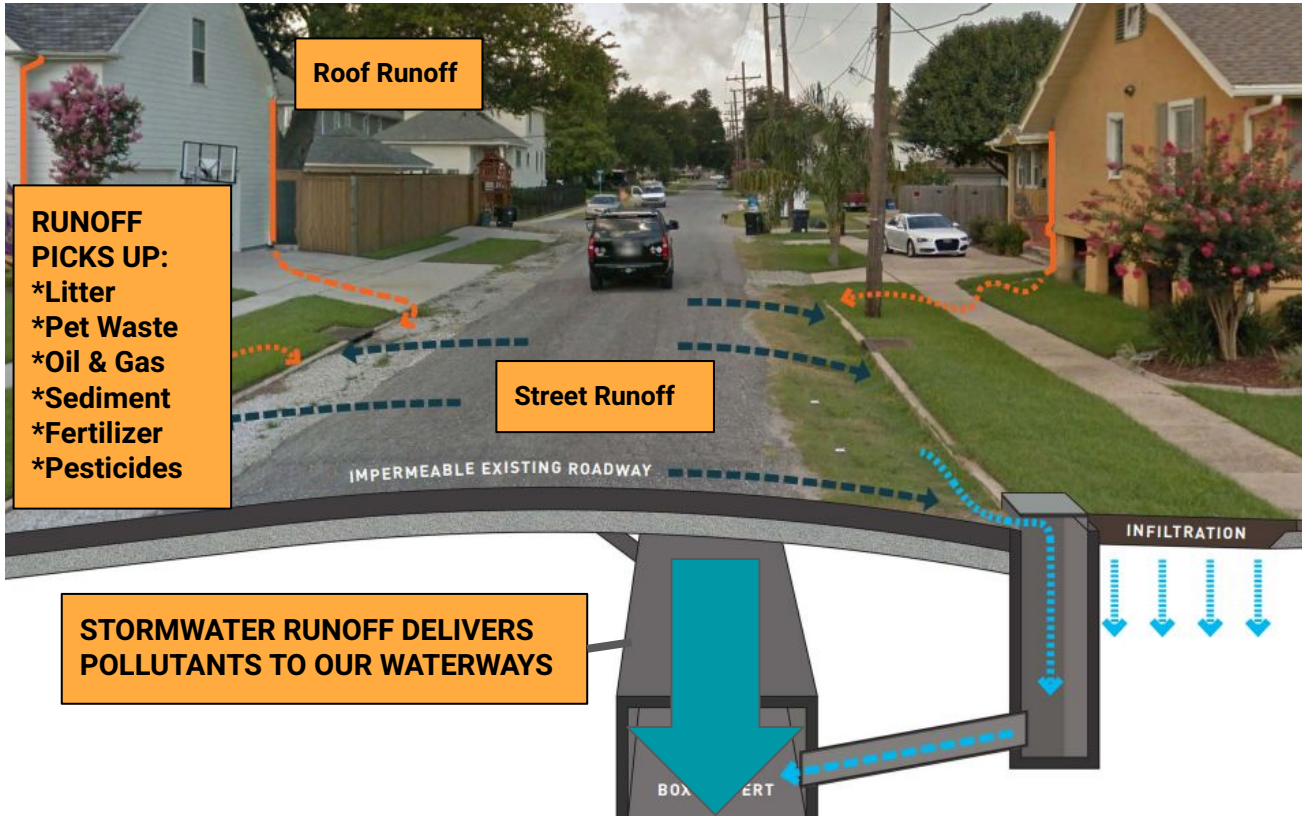
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Stormwater runoff pollutes



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Source: RiverLink

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RUNOFF = FLASHY STREAMS = EROSION



Source: Renee Fortner

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STORMWATER RUNOFF WORSENS FLOODING



Source: www.coast.noaa.gov

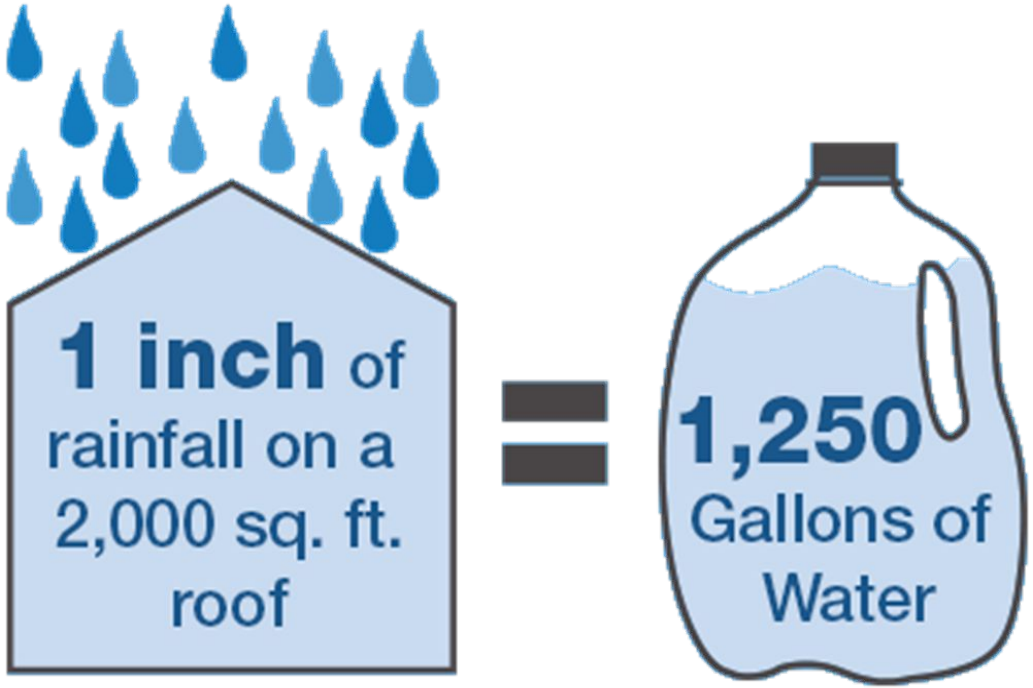
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Runoff from Rooftops

Major contributor of stormwater

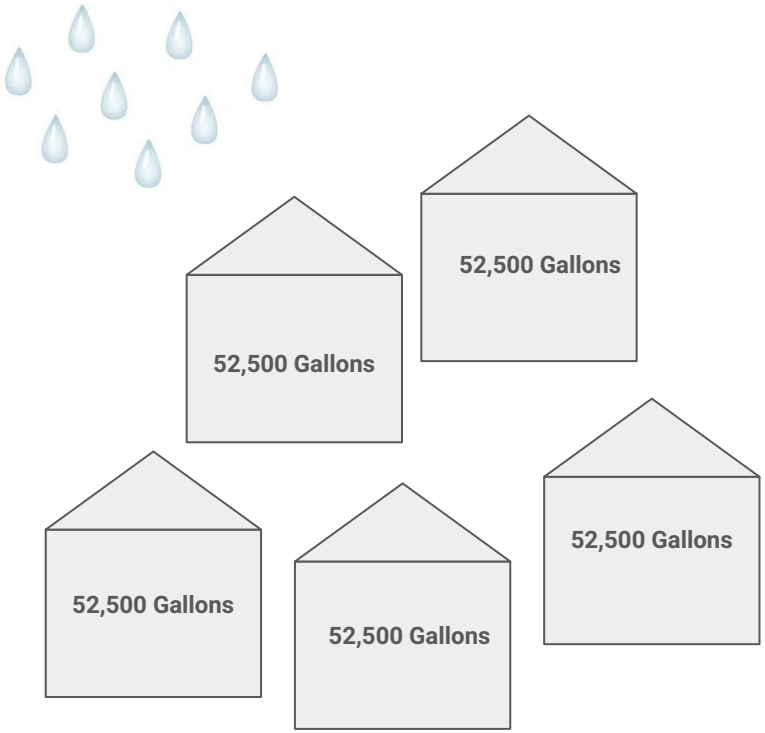


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Runoff from rooftops



8 BILLION GALLONS OF ROOF RUNOFF EVERY YEAR IN BUNCOMBE COUNTY



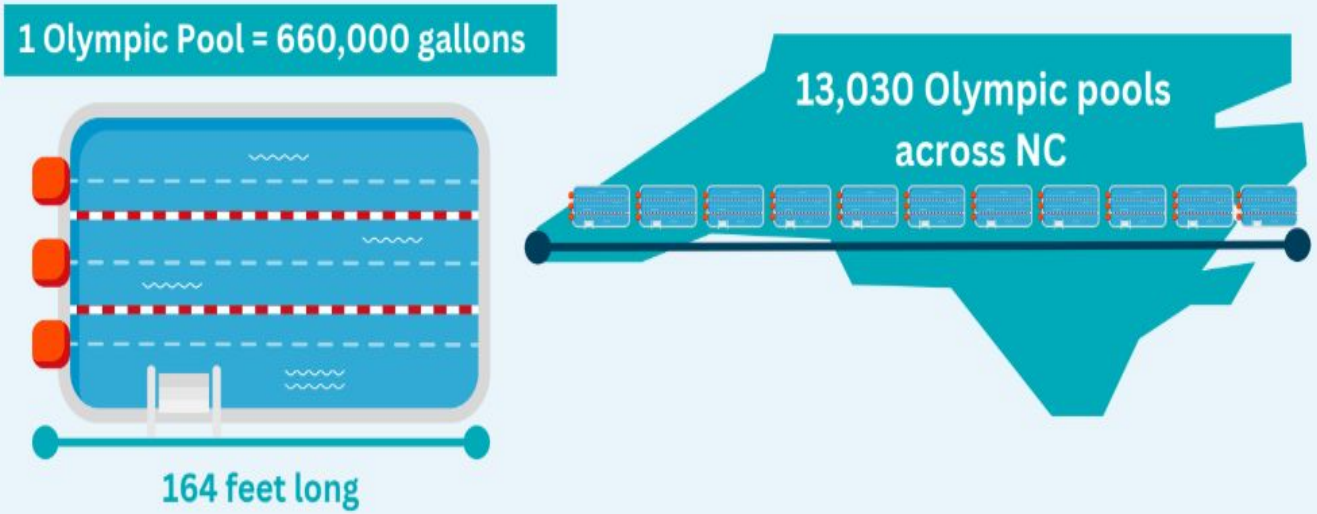
Source: RiverLink

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What does **8.6 billion gallons** look like?



Source: RiverLink

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Downspout disconnect project "Reduce Roof Runoff"

- **$25,000- Buncombe Clean Water Grant**
  - Redirect roof downspouts away from storm drains and impaired streams into rain barrels, rain gardens.
- **$50,500- Community Foundation of WNC**
  - Public relations campaign to raise awareness about stormwater runoff, provide resources on how to reduce runoff.

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Buncombe Clean Water Grant

- Targeted impaired streams with watershed action plans:
  - Smith Mill Creek, Central Asheville Watershed (Bacoate Branch, Nasty Branch), Upper Swannanoa

- Offered free rain barrels for low-income residents, 50% cost share for others = $35 rain barrel.

Source: RiverLink

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Outreach & recruitment

500 POSTCARDS MAILED

Water your plants for FREE!!

Capture rain water and **SAVE** $$ on your water bill with a free rain barrel!!



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Rain barrels collect water from your roof. This free water can be used to water indoor and outdoor plants.

You may qualify for a free or reduced cost rain barrel through our new Reduce Roof Runoff program. Fill out the interest form below and we will contact you soon!

Learn more at our website: www.riverlink.org/projects/reduce-roof-runoff

Generously funded by:

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Outreach & recruitment

Interest form

Interested in a Rain Barrel?

Do your roof gutters drain to a storm drain on the street or onto a hard surface like a driveway? If so, are you interested in redirecting your downspouts to a rain barrel?

This opportunity is made possible by Buncombe County's Clean Water Fund and focused on communities that are near one of three impaired streams: Smith Mill Creek, Nasty Branch, and the Upper Swannanoa River. Not sure if you live near one of these streams? Check the three maps below to see if your household qualifies for this program.

If eligible, we will provide a 50 gallon rain barrel at a low cost of $37.50. Deadline to apply is May 5, 2025!

renee@riverlink.org Switch account

Not shared

* Indicates required question

Do you live near one of the streams this program is targeting? Check these maps: *
(zoom in to find your street address)
Smith Mill Creek
Central Asheville Watershed

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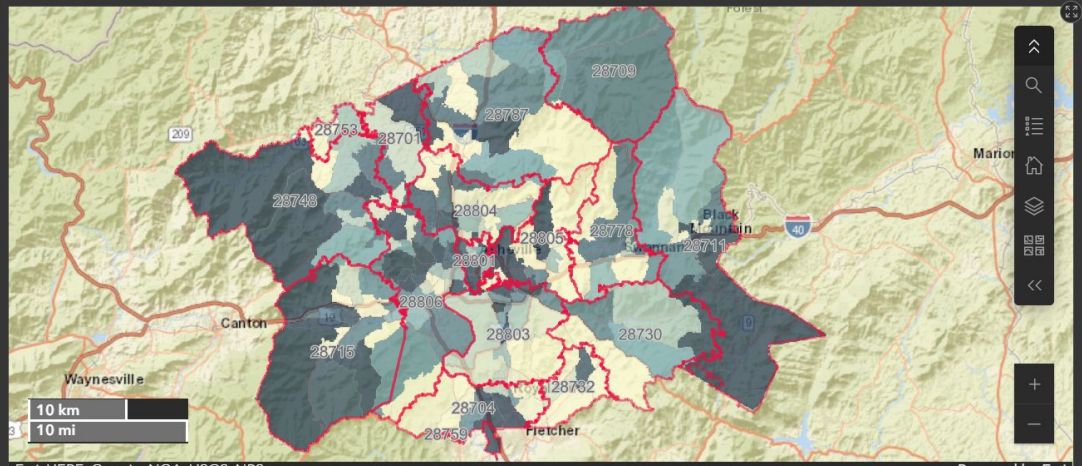
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Free rain barrel eligibility

Buncombe community index map

Buncombe County Community Index

The Buncombe County Community Index allows users to explore community characteristics at the Census Block Group level. In this index, dark blue indicates a high concentration of community members who might not be able to access essestial resources. Resources may not be available at all, or the available resources might not align with the community's needs. Pale yellow areas represent places in which community members are more likely to have access to resources or are places where resources might better align with community needs.



Community Index Map

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Site visits- *where do the gutters drain to?*





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Riverlink staff installed rain barrels





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Project Results



133 TOTAL RAIN BARRELS DISTRIBUTED

33 FREE RAIN BARRELS TO LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS

100 COST SHARE BARRELS SOLD AT HALF THE RETAIL PRICE

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PROJECT RESULTS



2 **RAIN GARDENS INSTALLED**



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THANK YOU





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