



Town of Huntington
Department of Maritime Services

Water Quality: Definitions & Issues

Water quality of both surface waters and subsurface (ground) water is a concern and challenge for Long Island.

Federal and State law require municipalities to monitor and where problematic reduce levels of so-named “pollutants/contaminants of concern” or POCs.

These can include pesticides, herbicides, hazardous chemicals, petroleum-based products and floatables (like bulk trash and plastic items).

Also included are elevated levels of bacterial coliform and levels of naturally occurring nutrients: nitrogen [N], phosphorus [P] and potassium [K], the sources of which cover fertilizer application and sanitary waste treatment and septic tank/cesspool systems.

POCs are classified as “Point Source” or “Non-Point Source”:

- Point Sources (PS) can be identified in the form of concentrated output from a treatment plant outfall pipe or the floor drain in a chemical storage area.
- Non-Point Sources (NPS) result from many diffuse sources. Rainfall and snow melt moving over and through the ground carry natural and manmade pollutants into low areas such as wetlands, coastal waters as well as to ground water. Pollution can also result directly from airborne contaminants settling on the ground and surface waters.

The typical sources of NPS pollution in Huntington include:

- Fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides from residential areas.
- Oil, grease, toxic chemicals runoff from roads, driveways and parking lots.
- Sediment from improperly managed construction sites
- Bacteria and nutrients from waterfowl, pet wastes and septic systems.

The steep slopes on either side of Northport and Centerport harbors contribute to the impact of rainfall and snowmelt runoff and the impact of NPSs on the quality of water in the Bay complex.