

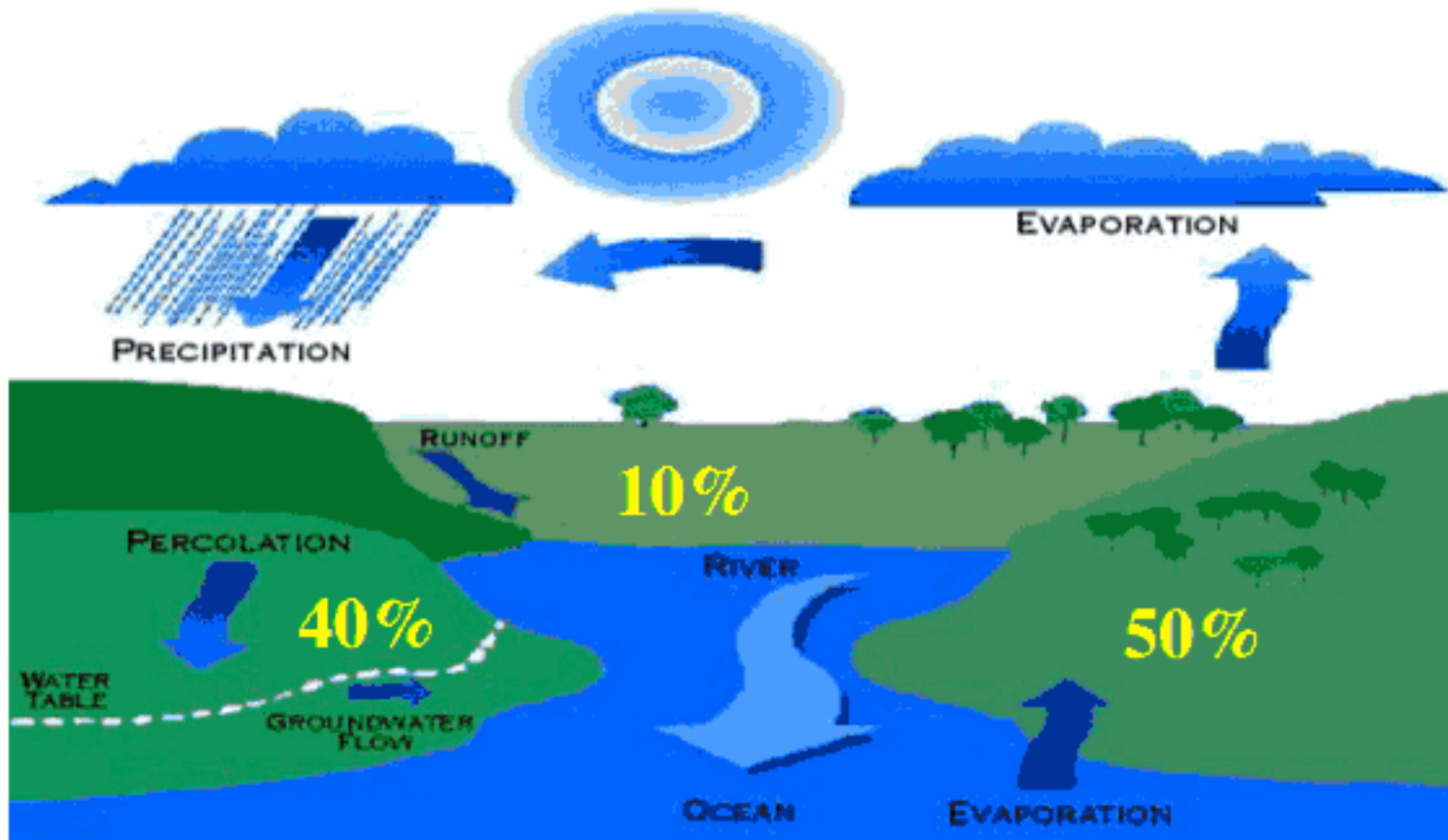
storm wa-ter: noun

Def: Rain and snow, not absorbed by plants and soil, that travels across land to the nearest waterbody

Question: It has always rained. Why do I keep hearing stormwater is such a problem now?

Answer: As we build more to accommodate a growing population and cover the soil with impervious surfaces (parking lots, roads, buildings, etc.) a great deal of rain water can no longer be absorbed into the soil the way it once was. Water that used to soak into the soil was actually cleansed by plant roots filtering pollutants. Now most of the rain and snow runs off, ending up in our lakes, streams and ocean. In short, we have been dramatically altering the water cycle as we change the landscape. *Where once only 10% of the rain ran off the land, now 60-90% does - carrying toxic pollutants on the land with it!*

NATURAL WATER CYCLE



MAN-MADE WATER CYCLE

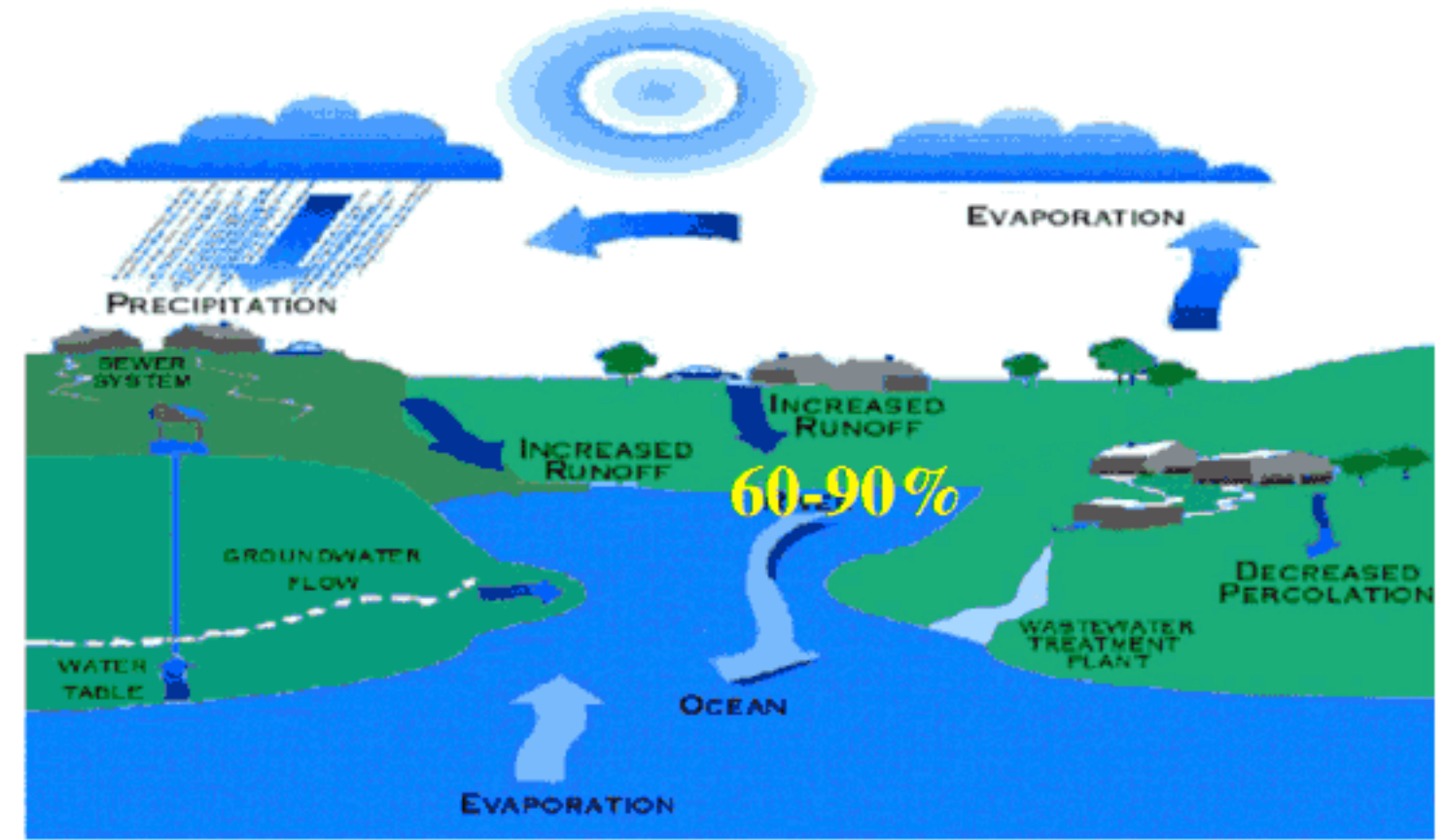


Image provided by Charles River Watershed Association


Question: Is stormwater runoff harmful?

Answer: Yes! Just about anything that has been deposited on the land, such as pet waste, cigarette butts, fertilizers, pesticides, plastic, automobile oil and gas can wash into our drinking water supply, favorite swimming hole or beach. The reason beaches have to close so often after a big rain storm is that stormwater runoff is often full of bacteria.

Question: Doesn't stormwater go to the sewage treatment plant via street storm drains and get treatment there?

Answer: No. Water goes to the nearest waterbody. Storm drains can offer some degree of treatment, but they are often not maintained or cleaned properly.



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