



# Love the Lea,

the country's most  
polluted river



## Why is the River Lea so polluted?

**Sewage** - After heavy rain, our sewer systems can't cope with the extra water in the drains. This causes Deephams Sewage Treatment Works in Edmonton to discharge millions of tonnes of wastewater into the River Lea. The toilets from thousands of homes in the Lea Valley are also sending waste down the wrong pipe, meaning people are unknowingly polluting their local river.

Research by Thames21 and University College London shows the amount of faecal e-coli bacteria in the river regularly exceeds international standards by more than 40 times.

**Road run-off** - Every time it rains, the dirt and grit from roads, combined with oil and fuel from vehicles goes down the drains and into local rivers.

**Phosphates** - Phosphates are found in household cleaning products like dishwasher tablets. They end up in our rivers after entering our drains and sewage treatment works. Here they act as fertilisers increasing weed growth. This stops sunlight getting through to the river, and uses up oxygen when the weeds rot - killing plants and fish.

**Misuse of drains** - Anything which enters street drains, including chemicals, petrol, paint and detergents, ends up in our rivers, damaging wildlife.

To Pledge your Love the Lea or for more information:

Email: [pledgelovethelea@thames21.org](mailto:pledgelovethelea@thames21.org) uk

[www.thames21.org.uk/project/lovethelea](http://www.thames21.org.uk/project/lovethelea)



# We can Love the Lea

with the following steps:



## Keep rainwater out of the sewers:

Deephams Sewage Works is to be upgraded by 2021. But population growth could see this extra capacity reached just 11 years after construction is completed.

To help prevent this, East London needs a comprehensive network of natural drainage systems in parks, next to roads and blocks of flats and at all new developments. These will cut the amount of rainwater that enters the sewers.

- Support our call for East London to start dealing with its rainwater properly and extend the life of Deephams Sewage Works
- Help us pressure property developers to build effective natural drainage systems to cut the rain entering local drains
- Use paving that lets rain soak into the ground naturally

## Misconnections:

- Support our call for Building Control Departments to ensure extensions like shower and utility rooms are connected correctly
- Check if your home's waste pipes are connected to the sewer and not the rainwater drainpipe at [www.connectright.org.uk](http://www.connectright.org.uk)
- Switch to phosphate-free dishwasher tablets and detergents

## Stop road pollution getting washed into rivers:

- Turn roadside verges into natural filters for storm water
- Transform car park bays into productive rain gardens

## Help spot and report pollution:

- Pollution from industrial sites, street drains and storm pipes goes unreported – call the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60

For more information and to support Love the Lea email:  
[pledgelovethelea@thames21.org.uk](mailto:pledgelovethelea@thames21.org.uk)

