Pollution Sources

The quality of our water depends on the care that humans give it. The type and amount of pollutants that are disposed of impact both surface and ground waters. There are two basic categories of pollutants: point and non-point source. Pollutants can be separated into two categories, point source and nonpoint source, depending on how they get into the water. *Point source* pollution refers to contaminants that enter the water directly, usually through a pipe. Examples are sewage treatment plants and industrial facilities, which have permits to discharge prescribed quantities of potential contaminants into a specific stream. *Nonpoint source* pollution, by contrast, originates across the watershed and enters the water at locations that cannot be easily identified. Examples of nonpoint source pollution include sediments, nutrients, pesticides, oil, and other chemicals. Point and nonpoint source pollution are illustrated in the figure. Nonpoint source pollution, which is not regulated, is the primary cause of water quality degradation in the U.S.

Answer the following questions about pollution sources.

**PART 1 – POLLUTION SOURCES**

1. Consider the types of pollution shown below and check the appropriate box, indicating if it is primarily a point source or non-point source of contamination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of pollution</th>
<th>Point source</th>
<th>Nonpoint source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pet wastes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Factories</td>
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<td>Sewage treatment plants</td>
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<td>Household cleaners not disposed of properly</td>
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<td>Pesticides used on lawns and gardens</td>
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<td>Oil leaks on driveways</td>
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<td>Fertilizer runoff</td>
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<td>Livestock waste</td>
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<td>Illegal dumping of hazardous liquids</td>
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<td>(for example down a storm drain)</td>
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<td>Landfills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soil erosion</td>
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2. What are the potential pollution threats to the water in your area (town, county, etc.)?

   Potential Point Sources –

   Potential Urban and Residential Nonpoint Sources –

   Agricultural Nonpoint Sources –

3. What are some ways you can reduce water pollution?
4. Examine the products you have in your home. Make a list of the potential contaminants you have in your home, garage, or on your property (for example: cleaning products; insecticides). Note any special disposal warnings on the product label, or find out how you should dispose of them.

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<tr>
<th>Potential Contaminant</th>
<th>Place Found</th>
<th>Disposal Warning</th>
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