

Town of Berne Roadside Litter Collection Volunteer Program

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Information on how this can help our community:

Keeping trash out of culverts might seem like a small, local task—but it actually has a **big ripple effect on the environment, water systems, and even your own land**. I'll break it down:

What a Culvert Does

A culvert is basically a **pipe or tunnel under a road or driveway** that lets water flow through.

When it works right:

- Rainwater drains properly
- Fields don't flood
- Soil stays in place

When it's clogged with trash... problems start fast.

Repercussions of NOT Cleaning Culverts

1. Flooding and Property Damage

Trash blocks water flow. Then:

- Water backs up into fields, roads, or yards
- Crops can drown
- Driveways and roads can wash out

For agricultural land, this can mean **lost income and soil damage**.

2. Soil Erosion (Losing Your Land Slowly)

Blocked culverts force water to go around instead of through.

That leads to:

- Washed-out ditches
- Gullies forming in fields
- Loss of valuable topsoil

Topsoil is critical for farming—it takes **years to naturally rebuild**.

3. Water Pollution

Trash breaks down and releases harmful materials into water:

- Plastics → microplastics
- Chemicals → contaminate streams
- Oils and residue → harm aquatic life

This disrupts natural processes like **water cycle** and damages local ecosystems.

4. Harm to Wildlife

Animals can:

- Get trapped in debris
- Ingest plastic
- Lose habitat when water systems are disrupted

Even small culverts often connect to creeks or wetlands where fish, frogs, and birds rely on clean water.

5. Increased Maintenance Costs

If ignored:

- Roads may need repairs
- Drainage systems fail
- Heavy equipment is needed later

A quick cleanup now prevents **expensive fixes later**.

Important for Agricultural Land

For someone with farmland:

- Protects crop production
- Prevents nutrient runoff
- Maintains usable land
- Reduces long-term costs

It's one of those **low-effort, high-impact habits**.

The Bigger Picture (Why It Matters Globally)

Even though cleaning one culvert seems small:

*Thousands of people doing it = cleaner rivers

*Cleaner rivers = healthier lakes and oceans *Healthier ecosystems = stronger planet overall

It's a simple action that directly supports the health of the Earth.