

A Few Facts on Non-point Source Pollution and What You Can Do

Did You Know?

- 99.7% of the Earth's water is unsuitable or unavailable for drinking?
- The water that you drink today is the same water that dinosaurs drank.
- Storm drains are not connected to sewage treatment plants, so pollutants captured in storm water runoff are carried directly into our rivers and streams.
- Everyone lives downstream.
- The average American uses 140 to 160 gallons of water per day.
- 61% of the stream miles assessed in Georgia do not fully meet water quality standards.
- In 85% of Georgia's streams and 99% of Georgia's lakes which were found to need improvements, non-point sources of pollutants are the cause of the problem.

Did you ever wonder what happens to the oil you see on roads and highways after it rains? Or what happens to detergent suds after you wash your car? What about leaves and grass clippings that clog up our street gutters, or the litter and grime left in our parking lots? Day after day, substances such as these are washed into our storm drainage systems. These pollutants flow directly into our streams and rivers untreated, where they contaminate our water sources and negatively impact aquatic life.

Blame for water pollution has often been directed toward "point" sources, such as industry, but these sources can be easily identified and corrected. The major threat to the quality of our streams and rivers today is from the difficult to identify "nonpoint" sources such as our homes, pet waste, automobiles, lawn chemicals, litter, construction, and agriculture. All of these are a direct result of our daily activities. We have been polluting our most precious resource and we probably did not even realize it.

Nonpoint pollution is anything that is thrown, dumped or spilled onto the pavement, the ground or in our storm drainage systems.

- **SERVICE YOUR CAR REGULARLY:** Motor oil, antifreeze, and other auto fluid leaks will eventually reach the nearest stream or river.
- **DON'T DUMP USED MOTOR OIL DOWN STORM DRAINS:** Take used motor oil and antifreeze to a facility or service station that recycles these products. Remember anything entering your storm drain goes directly into our rivers and streams untreated.
- **WASH YOUR CAR AT A DESIGNATED CAR WASH:** If you wash your car at

home use a low-phosphate soap and be sure to wash it on the lawn so that the grass can filter the soap.

- **MAINTAIN YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM:** Inspect your septic system annually. Pump it out every 3-5 years.
- **MANAGE ANIMAL WASTE PROPERLY:** Fecal matter from pets and livestock is a major source of bacteria in urban and rural waterways. Restrict pets from streamside areas and flush fecal matter down the toilet or wrap it up and place it in the trash. If cattle, hogs, or other livestock are located near a stream, river, lake or pond, a dense vegetation buffer is recommended for filtration.
- **USE GARDEN AND LAWN CHEMICALS WISELY:** Use pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers carefully and sparingly. Fertilizers promote algae and weed growth in streams and pesticides are toxic to people and fish.
- **WATER ONLY YOUR LAWN AND GARDEN:** Divert rain spouts and garden hoses away from paved surfaces and onto grass. This allows runoff to filter naturally through the soil.
- **DON'T PUT LEAVES OR GRASS CLIPPINGS DOWN THE STORM DRAIN:** Leaves, grass, and litter clog our storm drains. Compost leaves, grass and shrub, they will decompose and return natural nutrients to the soil, which could eliminate the need for fertilizer.
- **PREVENT EROSION:** Never leave soil exposed. Place straw over newly seeded areas and cover your garden during the winter months. Sediment (clay, silt) is the **NUMBER ONE** source of water pollution. Bare soil easily washes into storm drains and streams.
- **DON'T LITTER:** Litter is unsightly and it pollutes and clogs our waterways.

Water is so much a part of us

And our daily routine

That we often take it for granted

And forget that...

WATER IS LIFE!

Nonpoint source pollution isn't an inevitable consequence of growth and development. It is the product of human abuse and neglect. Working together we can make changes in our daily activities that will balance the needs of people with the integrity of our ecosystem.

**WE ARE THE SOLUTION
TO WATER POLLUTION!**