



# Clean Water Campaign

## Metro Atlanta's Solution to Stormwater Pollution

**When it rains, it pollutes!** Most metro Atlantans are unaware that the quality of the region's streams, rivers and lakes are threatened each time it rains. Stormwater runoff carries pollutants like oil, lawn fertilizers, litter and other waste, untreated into our waterways. In fact, the U.S. EPA estimates that 80 percent of water pollution is caused by stormwater runoff.

That is why some 20 Atlanta area local governments have launched the **Clean Water Campaign** with the assistance of the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. The goal of the **Campaign** is to raise awareness about the impacts of polluted stormwater and the actions that individuals and businesses can take to help.

### Isn't new development in metro Atlanta the main cause of all these problems?

Though there are some problems associated with sediment coming from construction sites in the Atlanta area, many of our current water quality problems are caused by runoff from older, developed areas. We can't solve our problems without dealing with the impacts from all of these areas.



### What is stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff is the rain that hits the ground and flows off streets, rooftops and lawns. Stormwater is collected by storm drains and drainage swales and flows into streams, rivers and lakes.



### What is the problem with stormwater runoff pollution anyway?

*Stormwater runoff picks up pollutants and debris as it flows across rooftops and lawns, streets and parking lots. During periods of rainfall, pollutants are picked up and washed directly into our streams, rivers and lakes. Some of these pollutants include oil and grease, harmful bacteria, fertilizers, toxic chemicals and other contaminants which are harmful to both people and aquatic life. A common misconception is that water running off streets and into a storm drain goes to a wastewater treatment plant. It does not. In fact, **stormwater usually receives no treatment.***

### What is the source of all these pollutants?

**We all are!** The fact is that all of us are part of the stormwater pollution problem. Many of the things that we do on a daily basis including taking care of our lawns, driving our cars, washing our vehicles and walking our pets can contribute to stormwater pollution. In addition, there are several categories of business activities that can pollute stormwater runoff. Since we are all part of the problem, we now have the opportunity to be part of the "solution to stormwater pollution."



## How can we solve the problem?

*As the public becomes aware that there are problems with stormwater runoff quality and begins to take action, the water quality of the region's streams, rivers and lakes will improve. As people learn that the storm drain or swale on their street flows directly into a nearby stream, they will be more interested in what drains to, or what is dumped into, the storm drain or swale. They will also be more likely to support the efforts of their local government to address the problems of stormwater runoff quality in their community.*

### Public Education and Awareness Program

The Clean Water Campaign hopes to reach metro Atlanta residents through a broad-based public information and education effort that includes an internet Web site, storm drain stenciling program, fact sheets and brochures, corporate partnerships and a media and public service announcement campaign that includes print, radio and television. We need your help to expand this effort and make clean water in metro Atlanta a reality!

### TOP 10 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO BE A "SOLUTION TO STORMWATER POLLUTION"

1. Never dump anything down a storm drain or into a drainage ditch.
2. Recycle motor oil and other vehicle fluids.
3. Throw litter in its place.
4. Clean up after your pet.
5. Check your vehicles for leaks (repair them!).
6. Dispose of household hazardous wastes at designated locations.
7. Compost yard clippings.
8. Use fertilizer and pesticide only when needed (Read the label!).
9. If you wash your vehicle at home, do so on the lawn rather than on pavement.
10. Tell a friend or neighbor about how to prevent stormwater pollution and get involved in your community.

### Ideas For Partnering with the Clean Water Campaign:



- Plan a stenciling event
- Re-print and distribute brochures at your location
- Hold an informational workshop on alternatives to pollutant generating activities

- Print stories in newsletters from the Clean Water Campaign
- Provide raw video footage for PSA production
- Disseminate pollution prevention messages to the public and business community
- Companies can print the web address and basic messages from the campaign on receipts, product items, promotional in-store displays, shopping bags, or assist in the production of PSAs
- And many more opportunities are available to participate with the Clean Water Campaign!

### About the Clean Water Campaign

The *Clean Water Campaign* is spearheaded by 20 Atlanta Region governments including: Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton and Gwinnett counties; and the cities of Acworth, Alpharetta, Atlanta, Austell, College Park, East Point, Fairburn, Hapeville, Kennesaw, Marietta, Palmetto, Powder Springs, Roswell, Smyrna and Union City. It is coordinated by the Atlanta Regional Commission and supported by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. Other environmental organizations, non-profits, corporations or governments are invited to join in this important campaign.



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