

What is Stormwater?

Stormwater is rain water that falls on roofs, lawns or paved areas like driveways and roads, and is carried away by a system of stormwater pipes or culverts and ditches. As it flows over the land surface, stormwater picks up or is contaminated by debris, chemicals, fertilizers, dirt and other pollutants. This untreated rain water is discharged into water bodies (creeks, rivers, lakes, etc.) we use for swimming, fishing and drinking water.

Why should I care?

- Contaminated or polluted stormwater can lead to significant water quality problems.
- Sediment clouds the water — which makes it difficult for aquatic plants to grow and destroying aquatic habitats.
- Excess nutrients cause algae blooms. Oxygen levels are depleted when the algae die and decompose. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't live when oxygen levels decrease.
- Debris washed into the water can choke, suffocate or disable aquatic life (ducks, fish, turtles and birds).
- Household hazardous wastes (insecticides, pesticides, paint and auto fluids) can poison aquatic life.
- Polluted stormwater often affects drinking water sources—human health is at risk and water treatment cost rise.

Additional information

United States Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater or www.epa.gov/nps

Georgia Environmental Protection Agency
www.gaepd.org

Information provided by:

“Make your Home the Solution to Stormwater Pollution!” by the United States Environmental Protection Agency

“After the Storm: A citizen’s guide to Understanding Stormwater” by the United States Environmental Protection Agency

“Stormwater Pollution Prevention: You can make a difference!” by Central New York regional Planning and Development Board



LOWNDES COUNTY ENGINEERING DEPT
P.O. BOX 1349
VALDOSTA, GEORGIA 31603-5504



Stormwater Pollution Prevention:

You can make a difference!



INFORMATION PROVIDED BY:

Lowndes County NPDES Stormwater Program

327 North Ashley Street
Valdosta, Georgia 31601
(229)671-2400 office
(229)245-5222 fax
www.lowndescounty.com
stormwater@lowndescounty.com

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Ways You Can Help Prevent Stormwater Pollution

Lawn and Garden Maintenance

- Use fertilizer and pesticides sparingly.
- Select native plants and grasses that are drought tolerant and pest resistant.
- Compost or recycle yard waste.
- Plant grass or vegetation where soil is exposed.
- Don't overwater your lawn. Water during the cool times of the day and don't let water run off into the storm drain.



Swimming Pool and Spa

- Drain your swimming pool only when a test kit does not detect chlorine levels.
- Whenever possible, drain your pool or spa into the sanitary sewer system.
- Properly store pool and spa chemicals to prevent leaks and spills, preferably in a covered area to avoid exposure to stormwater.



Pet Care

- When walking your pet, remember to pick up the waste and dispose of it properly.
- Leaving pet waste on the ground can increase public health risk by allowing harmful bacteria and nutrients to wash into the storm drain and eventually into the local water bodies.

Septic System Maintenance

- Have your septic system inspected by a professional every 3 years.
- Pump your septic tank every 3 to 5 years.
- Do not drive or park vehicles on septic drain fields.
- Only plant grass over and near the drain field to avoid damage from roots.
- Flush responsibly! Do not flush household hazardous waste in sinks or toilets.

Trash and Hazardous Waste



- Sweep up and properly dispose of construction debris such as concrete and mortar.
- Put cigarette butts and other litter in garbage bins.
- Clean paint brushes in a sink, not outdoors.
- Dispose of solvent waste by following instructions printed on the label.



Automotive

- Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on a lawn or other unpaved surface (instead of the driveway) to minimize the amount of dirty, soapy water flowing into the storm drain, culvert or ditch.
- Check your car, boat, motorcycle, machinery and equipment for leaks and spills.
- Clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material like kitty litter or sand, and don't rinse the spills into a nearby storm drain.
- Properly dispose of all used absorbent material.
- Recycle used oil and other automotive fluids at participating auto parts stores. Don't dump these chemicals down the storm drain, ditches or dispose of them in your trash.



This brochure was created by the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners Engineering Department in fulfillment of its requirements of the Phase II National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.