

SOMETHING FISHY'S GOING ON IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

The Gwinnett County Department of Public Utilities is stenciling Gwinnett County's storm drains for the Stormwater Management Program.

They're doing what?

Volunteers are stenciling a fish symbol with a NO DUMPING message on storm drains throughout Gwinnett County. The goal is to stencil all the County's storm drains.

But why?

The Stormwater Management Program stenciling will remind citizens that water quality and aquatic life are directly affected by waste going down storm drains. This is known as non-point source pollution.

Non-point what?

Non-point source pollution originates with the overuse of yard chemicals and with the careless dumping of motor oil, anti-freeze, and paint. Rainwater runoff picks up litter, yard waste, excess fertilizers and pesticides, residue from oil leaks on streets and parking lots, and sediment from construction sites. When these pollutants enter waterways by way of storm drains they eventually affect fish and other aquatic life.

What can I do to help?

It's simple!

- Don't pour anything in a gutter or down a storm drain that you wouldn't want to swim in.
- Keep your neighborhood free of litter and yard waste.
- Don't blow leaves or grass clippings into the street, storm drains or ditches.
- Fix your vehicle's oil leaks and service regularly.
- Don't overuse fertilizers or pesticides. Fertilizers promote algae and weed growth in streams. Pesticides can be toxic to people and fish.
- Restrict pets from stream side areas. Pick up animal waste and dispose of it in garbage cans. Animal waste can destroy native vegetation. Fecal bacteria from animal waste lowers water quality.
- Maintain your septic system properly. Poorly maintained septic systems will not adequately treat waste and it will eventually discharge into the nearest stream.
- Take used motor oil and antifreeze to a recycling location.

For recycling information, see Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful's web page at www.gwinnettcb.org.

Facts about non-point source pollution

- Non-point source pollution has been identified by the Environmental Protection Agency as the nation's main cause of water quality problems.
- Fish and waterfowl may ingest non-biodegradable litter that accumulates along shorelines.
- Aquatic animals can mistake plastic for food or can become entangled in it.
- Pet and yard waste can contain both bacteria and oxygen-consuming materials which lead to fish kills.
- Homeowners often apply much more fertilizer than necessary for plant health. Excess can be washed off causing water pollution.
- In the United States alone, an estimated 200 million gallons of used motor oil are improperly disposed of by being dumped on the ground, tossed in the trash (ending up in landfills), and poured down storm drains. Just one quart of motor oil can contaminate 250,000 gallons of drinking water spreading toxic effects along the way (source EPA).
- Do-it-yourselfers spill or dump more oil in a month than has been lost in major tanker disasters.

Don't be a part of the source. Practice responsible behavior.

DON'T LITTER OR POLLUTE

Please report any discharges of waste or pollutants to the storm sewer by calling 678-376-7000.

For more information on volunteering for the Stormwater Management Program or how you can prevent non-point source pollution, call the Gwinnett County Department of Public Utilities at 678-376-6931 or visit our web page at www.gwinnettstormwater.com.