

Keeping Our Water Resources Clean:

Everyday Things You Can Do to Help

If you have any questions or concerns regarding stormwater pollution, or if you would like to make a suggestion, please click on the following link and fill out the form that follows:

[Stormwater Pollution Feedback Form](#)

It's up to all of us to help keep our streams, rivers, and coastline clean. Some of the areas in which we can contribute are as follows:

- Pesticides
- Water Conservation
- Proper Disposal of Household Hazardous Wastes
- Pet Waste Management
- Trash Management
- Failing On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems (Septic Systems)

Pesticides:

The following web sites provide education and information regarding safe pesticide use and disposal:

- University of Nebraska's *Pesticide Education Resources* at <http://pested.unl.edu/>
- University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences' *Pesticide Safety Education* at [\http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/~pse/welcome.html
- Pennsylvania State University Pesticide Education Program's *Pesticide Urban Initiative* at <http://urbanpested.cas.psu.edu/>
- Washington State University's *Pesticide and Environmental Stewardship* at <http://pep.wsu.edu/>
- National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides' *Beyond Pesticides* at <http://www.beyondpesticides.org/>
- Cornell University's *Pesticide Management Education Program* at <http://pmep.cce.cornell.edu/>

Water Conservation:

Some water conservation practices that can be recommended include:

- Run the dishwasher and laundry machines only with full loads. Use the shortest wash and rinse cycles and the lowest water level setting possible. Avoid the permanent press cycle, which uses an additional 10 to 20 gallons of water.
- When hand-washing dishes, do not let the water run continuously.
- Avoid using garbage disposal systems.
- When buying a new washing machine, choose a suds-saver model.
- In the bathrooms, place two half-gallon plastic bottles filled with water in the toilet tank to reduce the amount of flush water used.
- Take shorter showers and use a water-conserving showerhead (less than 2.5 gallons per minute) rather than taking baths, which use 30 to 50 gallons of water.
- When shaving, brushing teeth, or washing your face, do not let the water run continuously.
- When washing your car, use a bucket, and wash and rinse sections individually. Use a high-pressure, low-volume hose with a nozzle.
- Water the lawn only when absolutely necessary. More water is consumed using sprinkler and irrigation systems than if a hand-held hose is used (International Turf Producers Foundation, no date). (Trickle irrigation systems and soaker hoses are 20 percent more efficient than sprinklers.)
- Water lawns only during the coolest time of day to avoid evaporation of the water.

There are many resources for water conservation information, including the following:

- The Groundwater Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to informing the public about groundwater. One of their education programs, Groundwater Guardian, attempts to encourage communities to begin groundwater awareness and protection activities. When communities participate in this program, the Groundwater Foundation supports the communities in their efforts and recognizes their achievements. Communities that participate form a Groundwater Guardian team, consisting of citizens, business and/or agricultural representatives, educators, and local government officials. This team develops Result-Oriented Activities (education and awareness, pollution prevention, public policy, conservation, and best management practices) to address the community's groundwater protection concerns. An annual conference allows teams from all around the country to exchange success stories and ideas

[\(http://www.groundwaterfoundation.org/\)](http://www.groundwaterfoundation.org/).

- The American Water Resources Association (2001) sponsors *WaterWiser: The Water Efficiency Clearinghouse* (<http://www.waterwiser.org/>), which provides links to books, articles, and web sites related to water conservation. Topics include conservation tips, drought information, public education, irrigation, landscaping, water reuse/recycling, efficient fixtures/appliances, water savings calculators, water-related organizations and agencies, and links to state and local water conservation web sites.
- The Rocky Mountain Institute (no date) created a resource for household water efficiency that contains guidance for homeowners, utilities, and civic groups. Especially useful for municipalities is the page entitled *Civic Action: Promoting Water Efficiency, Protecting Rivers* (www.rmi.org/sitepages/pid123.asp), which provides links to information that can help watershed groups and municipalities inform the public about ways they can reduce water use in the home.
- The Chesapeake Bay Program (2000) presents information on water conservation practices at a web site called *Ways You Can Help the Bay*, which is located at www.chesapeakebay.net/helpbay.htm.

Proper Disposal of Household Hazardous Wastes:

Most of us deal with hazardous chemicals everyday. If we are to keep our waterways clean, it is important to dispose of our household hazardous wastes properly. Keep in mind that the curb inlets and catch basins found along our streets and yards lead directly to our streams and rivers ***with no treatment whatsoever***. Therefore it is necessary to make sure these waste products are recycled or disposed of properly.

Hazardous products include the following:

- Cleaning products: oven cleaner, floor wax, furniture polish, drain cleaner, and spot remover
- Car care and maintenance: motor oil, battery acid, gasoline, car wax, engine cleaner, antifreeze, degreaser, radiator flush, and rust preventative
 - Home improvement products: paints, preservatives, strippers, brush cleaners, and solvents
 - Other products labeled toxic, flammable, or corrosive, or containing lye, phenols, petroleum distillates, or trichlorobenzene

The Following Lists Provide Information on Recycling Centers to Be Found in Mississippi:

- [Mississippi Recycling Directory](#)
- [Computer/Electronics Recycling Directory](#)
- [Fluorescent Lamps/Mercury Recycling Directory](#)

- [Paper Brokers/End-users Directory](#)
- [Plastic Brokers/End-users Directory](#)
- [Scrap Tire Collection/Recycling Directory](#)
- [Used Motor Oil Recycling Directory](#)

The following link also provides useful information regarding household hazardous waste:

- [Guide to Household Hazardous Waste](#)

Pet Waste Management

When pet waste is not properly disposed of, it can wash into nearby waterbodies or can be carried by runoff into storm drains. Since storm drains do not connect to treatment facilities, but rather drain directly into lakes and streams, untreated animal feces can become a significant source of runoff pollution.

As pet waste decays in a waterbody, it uses up oxygen, sometimes releasing ammonia. Low oxygen levels and ammonia combined with warm temperatures can be detrimental to the health of fish and other aquatic life. Pet waste also contains nutrients that promote weed and algae growth (eutrophication). Eutrophic water becomes cloudy and green, making it unattractive or even prohibitive for swimming and recreation. Pet waste also carries bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can pose risks to human health and threaten wildlife.

Trash Management

Trash and floating debris in waterways have become significant pollutants, especially in areas where a large volume of trash is generated in a concentrated area. Trash in waterbodies contributes to visual pollution and detracts from the aesthetic qualities of the landscape. It also poses a threat to wildlife and human health (e.g., choking hazards to wildlife and bacteria to humans). Additionally, trash and debris can clog the intake valves on boat engines, which results in expensive repairs.

One way to get involved in cleaning up our water is to take part in the annual [Mississippi Coastal Cleanup](#). This event brings together 2,000 volunteers annually to remove debris from shorelines, bayous, bays, rivers, waterways, and beaches. In September 2003 volunteers collected 72,988 pounds of trash. Valuable information on the amount and types of debris is collected, people are educated on the issue of marine debris, and the data that is collected is used to affect positive change. The Mississippi Coastal Cleanup is organized by the Mississippi Coastal Debris Cleanup Task Force and is sponsored by Chevron Texaco's Pascagoula Refinery. It is performed in conjunction with the [International Coastal Cleanup](#), which is sponsored by the [Ocean Conservancy](#).

Failing On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems

Many homes in Mississippi rely on septic systems and other types of individual onsite disposal systems (IOWDS) to process their wastewater. These systems can sometimes cause polluted runoff if improperly installed or maintained.

The following links provide information regarding on-site wastewater treatment systems:

- [What Happens After the Flush](#)
- [Septic / Onsite Wastewater Systems](#)

Note: The links included on this webpage provide a way to access information not located on the City of Gulfport's website. These links provide additional information that may be useful or interesting and is being provided consistent with the intended purpose of the City of Gulfport. However, the City of Gulfport cannot attest to the accuracy of information provided by this link or any other linked site. Providing links to other websites does not constitute an endorsement by the City of Gulfport or any of its employees of the sponsors of the sites or the information or products presented therein.