



Storm Sewers – The Rivers Beneath Our Feet

If you look in the street outside of your home or office and search the parking lots around town, you will probably find storm sewer inlets. Did you ever wonder where they go?

A common misconception about storm sewers is that they go to a wastewater treatment plant. This is not the case. Storm sewers transport stormwater to the nearest river, lake, stream or wetland.

Stormwater often contains materials found on streets and parking lots such as oil, gasoline, soil, litter, pet wastes, fertilizers, pesticides, leaves and grass clippings. When these materials enter waterways, they become pollutants that pollute the water and can kill fish and close beaches.

The storm sewer system includes roadside ditches, gutters, inlets, catch basins and underground pipes that collect stormwater and carry it away from our streets, parking lots and yards.

What can you do to help?

- *Do not allow soil, leaves or grass clippings to accumulate on your driveway, sidewalk or in the street.*
- *Do not use the storm sewer for disposing of motor oil, pesticides, paints, solvents, or other materials.*
- *Sweep (do not wash) fertilizer and soil off driveways and walkways onto the lawn. Any debris remaining on paved areas will quickly be washed into the nearest storm sewer during the next rainfall.*
- *Dispose of pet wastes by flushing them down the toilet or burying them.*
- *Redirect down spouts from paved areas to vegetated areas.*
- *Install gravel trenches along driveways or patios.*
- *Use porous materials such as wooden plans or bricks for walkways and patios.*
- *Use a rain barrel to catch and store water for gardens.*
- *Wash your car on the lawn, not the driveway.*

City Ordinance No. 861, Sec. 20-132 prohibits the blowing of any litter (including leaves and grass clippings) onto any surface area, stormwater management system, or water body within the City. Section 20-136 provides for a minimum penalty of \$500 per offense for any of the violations contained within the Ordinance.

Another step the City is taking is installing markers on all stormwater drains as a reminder that anything that enters the drain will end up untreated in a waterway.



This article is comprised of information provided in the Stormwater Education Toolkit produced by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, EPA, MRI, and Florida Community College's Consortium for Pollution Prevention Education