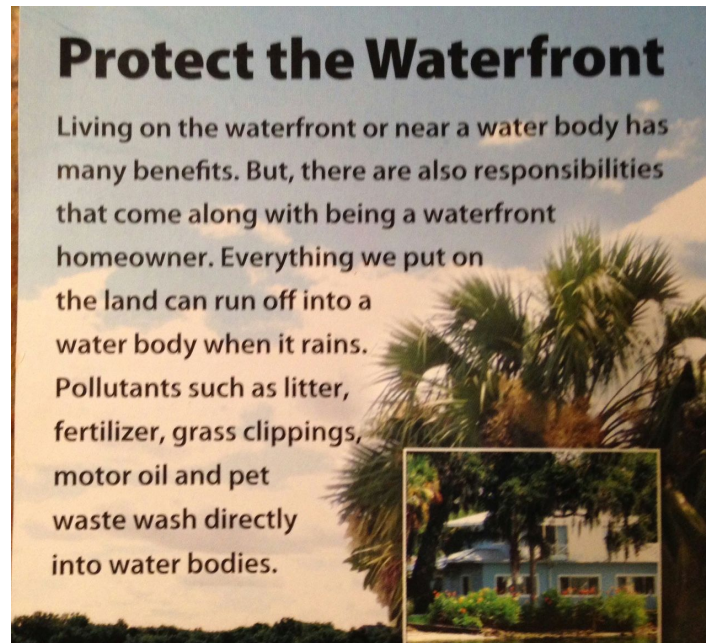


Resident Tips for Protecting Our Waterfronts

Why do we want to protect our waterfronts?



What is stormwater Runoff?

Stormwater Runoff is rainfall that does not seep into the ground but runs off over our yards, streets, parking lots, and buildings. The stormwater runoff then enters our storm sewer system which flows directly into creeks, lakes, Tampa Bay, or the Gulf of Mexico.

How does stormwater get polluted?

As stormwater flows over our lawns, driveways and parking lots, it picks up fertilizers, oil, chemicals, grass clippings, litter, pet waste, and anything else in its path. The storm sewer system then transports these pollutants to local lakes and streams, and eventually Tampa Bay or the Gulf of Mexico.

Are the storm sewers the same as sanitary sewers?

Stormdrains are the openings you see along curbs and in streets and parking lots. They carry away rainwater and transport it through the storm sewer system to nearby waterways. Water and other debris that enter stormdrains do not go to a treatment facility. In contrast, the sanitary sewer takes household water and waste from toilets, sinks and showers, and transports it to a wastewater treatment facility. There, the water is treated and can be reused for reclaimed water. You can contact us to obtain materials including storm drain markers that state "only rain down the drain" and [door hangers like this one](#) to distribute throughout your community.

Homeowners:

Homeowners can make a big difference in our local stormwater runoff by minimizing fertilizer and pesticide use, picking up after

their pets, do not feed wildlife (birds) and washing their cars at a car wash facility. Other helpful measures include not draining your pool into the storm sewer, recycling hazardous household waste and landscaping using [Florida Friendly Practices](#) .

What is a watershed?

A watershed is a defined area of land from which all precipitation collects and drains to a common stream, bay, marsh, or lake.

Why can't I dump grass clippings into the stormdrain or onto the roads?

Grass clippings and other landscape debris not only can block stormwater pipes causing flooding, but also are a significant source of nutrients. While it is great for your lawn, it causes pollution of our waters.

What causes poor water quality?

A number of factors may contribute to poor water quality. Some of the main culprits are runoff of fertilizers and pesticides from yards, oil and grease from cars, and sediment from construction sites. Trash, runoff of hazardous materials, dumping of waste, and spills are other pollutants that degrade water quality. Natural occurrences such as algae blooms, although often triggered by pollution, may also contribute to a decline in water quality.

REFERENCES

[**Homeowner's Guide to Preventing Urban Stormwater Runoff**](#) - available online from Pinellas County. Cut and paste in a browser

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/environment/watershed/StormwaterBrochures/Guide-for-Homeowners.pdf>






[**Protecting our waterfront**](#) - available free of charge from SWFWMD online bookstore.

What can we do to protect our waterfronts?

WATER TIPS

There's Still Time to Protect Your Waterfront

Waterfront homeowners can help protect water quality by following these tips:

- ✓ Designate a "maintenance-free zone" of at least 10 feet between your lawn or landscape and the water body. Don't mow, fertilize or apply pesticides to this buffer area. 
- ✓ Plant a six-foot buffer zone of low-maintenance plants between your lawn and the shoreline to absorb nutrients and provide a wildlife habitat. 
- ✓ Install appropriate aquatic plants to prevent soil erosion. 
- ✓ Never prune mangroves or remove any vegetation without first seeking proper permits and guidelines. If you have mangroves, contact the Florida Sea Grant Extension Program, Florida Department of Environmental Protection or your local government's natural resources department for information on proper management.
- ✓ Remove invasive aquatic plants such as water lettuce, hydrilla and water hyacinth by cutting, pulling or raking. 
- ✓ Use fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides sparingly or not at all.
- ✓ Use mulch around plants to retain moisture.
- ✓ Wash your car at a commercial car wash that uses recycled water, or wash it on the lawn using natural cleaning products.
- ✓ Pick up litter, fertilizer, grass clippings, motor oil and pet waste before these materials enter storm drains and flow into water bodies. 

**Southwest Florida
Water Management District**

WATERMATTERS.ORG • 1-800-423-1476

This information will be made available in accessible formats upon request.
Please contact the Communications Department at (352) 796-7211 or 1-800-423-1476
(FL only), ext. 4757; TDD only at 1-800-231-6103 (FL only). VISPT 08/08

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