

As authorized by the Clean Water Act of 1972, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program controls water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States. The NPDES program is an unfunded federal mandate which requires the City of St. Cloud to maintain the public drainage system, provide public education, monitor construction sites and train our staff to help reduce the amount of pollutants entering our drainage system.

The City of St. Cloud and the Osceola County Extension Services have teamed up to provide the public education portion of the NPDES program. The Osceola County Extension Services can be reached at 321-697-3000.

What is illegal dumping?

Illegal dumping of pollutants (such as oil, gas, lawn clippings, pet waste, etc.) into storm inlets, swales, ditches or lakes will result in a fine. To report illegal dumping please call 407-957-7238. To legally dispose of these pollutants, please contact the St. Cloud Solid Waste Division at 407-957-7289.

Why is stormwater pollution an issue?

Quality of Life: Uncontrolled Stormwater pollution affects the way lakes or other water bodies look and smell, making it unpleasant to be near. When sediment gets in lakes, the water no longer appears clear. Increased nutrients causes algae blooms in our lakes. Reducing the pollutants, household chemicals and sediment will improve our lakes and the quality of life for everyone living in and around our community.

Habitat: Water pollution creates an unhealthy environment for habitat and wildlife that live in and around waterways. Sediment and other debris clog fish gills, damage fish habitat and block the light aquatic plants need to survive. Some wildlife and aquatic life can survive or adapt to living in polluted conditions, while many others will not be able to survive.

Recreation: Stormwater pollution is a serious problem for wildlife dependent on our waterways and for the people who live near polluted lakes, ponds and streams. It can cause a decline in the fish populations, disturb habitats and limit water recreation activities. Polluted stormwater poses a series of threats to the overall health of the ecosystem.

Where do water pollutants come from?

There are many sources for water pollution in our community. Runoff from rainfall and irrigation constantly washes pollutants into storm drains and drainage ditches, carrying oil, chemicals and silt to the nearest creek or wetland. The ground that once absorbed rainfall is now covered by buildings and pavement, more rainfall than ever is entering our drainage system and local streams.

What is Ground Water?

Ground water is water that is stored in the cracks and spaces between soil and rock particles below the

ground. It is one of Florida's most vital natural resources, the source of drinking water for more the 90 percent of the state's population. Floridians use about 4.6 billion gallons of ground water per day.

Ground water protection is crucial to Florida. High rainfall and the state's unique geology, a thin, permeable soil cover, high water table, porous limestone formations, and the high potential for salt water intrusion makes our ground water extremely vulnerable to contamination. The threats to ground water can come from many sources, both natural and manmade. Nature can change the quality of our ground water through severe weather, droughts and contamination that enters through sinkholes. Unfortunately, human activity is the main contributor to ground water contamination. Several threats to our ground water are listed below:

- Storm water Runoff
- Pesticides and Fertilizers
- Septic Tanks
- Underground Storage Tanks
- Hazardous Waste
- Landfills
- Surface Impoundments
- Accidents and Illegal Dumping