

# Jefferson County Department of Storm Water Management



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## JeffCo H<sub>2</sub>O News

### What's the Roof Got to Do With It?

Actually, a lot! During a one inch rain, a 1,000 square foot roof has about 600 gallons of stormwater running off of it. That's 600 gallons that are moving very quickly, picking up whatever is on the ground in your yard, carrying it into the storm drainage system, and emptying into the nearest waterway. There are many ways to reduce the amount of stormwater that leaves your yard. Collecting roof runoff in a rain barrel and using it later for yard irrigation, or diverting downspouts to a rain garden or natural area to allow water to soak into the ground are just a few. How much stormwater runs off your roof? Just multiply the roof square footage X 0.6 (gallons per square foot per inch of rain).

### What's Happening?

**This January, make a resolution you can keep!** It's that time of year to resolve to exercise more, eat healthier foods, or learn a new skill. But often by the time March rolls around, those great intentions are a thing of the past. This year, make a Green Resolution that will be easier to keep all year long, and might even save you money in the process. Replace one incandescent light bulb per month with a CFL or LED, keep one more item out of the trash by recycling, rethink your landscaping and make changes to allow more stormwater to soak into your yard ... you get the idea.

**March 22 is World Water Day.** This year's theme is the *International Year of Water Cooperation*. With a world population of 7 billion people and counting, and disputes over water rights occurring right here in Alabama, it makes sense to remember how precious and limited our water resources are. We can't make more water, but we can protect and conserve what we do have. Consider reducing your water footprint by supporting sustainable practices in the foods you eat, the products you purchase, and how you manage your home and yard.



It's not too soon to think ahead to spring flowers! A rain barrel can capture and store stormwater for later use. Installing pavers to create paths or patios in your yard can add a beautiful element to your landscape that is also stormwater friendly.



## FROM ROOF TO STREAM



### CONTROL POLLUTION IN BETWEEN

MAKING CHANGES IN YOUR DAILY ACTIVITIES CAN PREVENT WATER POLLUTION

RAINFALL CARRIES DOG WASTE, LAWN CHEMICALS, BARE SOIL, VEHICLE FLUIDS AND TRASH FROM YARDS, PARKING LOTS AND STREETS DIRECTLY INTO OUR LOCAL WATERWAYS UNTREATED. WATER POLLUTION CAN BE PREVENTED.

REPORT SUSPECTED WATER POLLUTION, CALL 325-8741



### The Middle

When it comes to stormwater pollution, the middle is where it all happens. From your roof to the nearest waterway, anything on the ground or exposed to rain can become a pollutant! And most of these sources of stormwater pollution come from our everyday practices: fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides from yards and gardens, motor oil and grease from miles of roads and parking lots, heavy metals from roofs, eroded soil from construction sites and home landscaping projects, waste from pets, and litter and trash are carried by stormwater into the storm drainage system where it all flows untreated into waterways.

When you consider that 659,000 people live in Jefferson County, the amount of stormwater pollution that we generate each day is..... well, it's a lot. And since we get about 54 inches of rain each year, managing stormwater in your yard is a good place to start. Anything that slows it down, spreads it out, and allows it to soak into the ground will make a positive difference in our water quality.

Creating natural areas and planting trees in your yard are excellent ways to keep more stormwater from leaving your property. Depending upon their size, trees can absorb hundreds of gallons of stormwater every year. In addition, the leaf canopy slows stormwater while the root system helps anchor the soil, reducing erosion. When selecting and planting a tree, make sure that the site you choose will accommodate its full grown size as well as its water and sunlight requirements.

Reducing the need for irrigation and chemicals is another way to make your yard more stormwater friendly. Consider using pavers to transform some existing high-maintenance turf areas into permeable patios or paths. Pavers that are set into sand or gravel are a decorative and easy addition to your yard, and allow stormwater to soak into the ground. Your new path or patio also will reduce yard maintenance since it won't require mowing!

**Don't Forget!** Just because the holidays are over doesn't mean that the need for properly disposing of used household cooking oil and grease is over, too. Prevent those clogs from happening by recycling cooking oil and grease at one of [Jefferson County's 17 recycling stations!](#)