



VOLUNTEERS CAN PROTECT WATER QUALITY

In order to legally have a storm drainage system, the City of Charlotte must meet the conditions of a Clean Water Act Permit. Many things are required by the Permit including *municipal good housekeeping measures, construction site runoff controls, a public education program and protective ordinances such as the Post-Construction Controls Ordinance*. The goal of the Permit is to protect and restore the water quality of Charlotte's creeks, lakes and rivers.

One of the ways that Storm Water Services meets the goals of the Permit and improves water quality is by providing a variety of ways for volunteers to contribute their time and passion to protecting and restoring the creeks and lakes in our community.

Volunteers are a Valuable Asset

Storm Water Services provides several different types of volunteering programs because we know that volunteers are motivated differently. Some programs have shorter time commitments than others. Some programs are better suited to businesses or families with small children.

No matter which program is chosen, volunteers provide eye-witness accounts of conditions in the stream. They help keep track of the more than 3,000 miles of streams in Mecklenburg County by alerting staff to pollution.

By the Numbers

In Fiscal Year 2012, 2,708 volunteers:

- Marked 2,057 storm drains
- Removed 11 tons of trash and debris from streams
- Spent 3,047 hours volunteering
- Adopted 114 miles of streams

Be a Water Watcher

Even if residents don't participate in a formal program, they can help out anytime by being a Water Watcher. Call 311 to report illegal dumping down the storm drain or pollution in a creek. Use the Water Watchers App to report pollution from a smart phone. Follow the activities of all the volunteers on the Water Watchers Facebook page.

Water Watchers look for the following warning signs in creeks to report pollution:

- Muddy creek
- Foam or excessive bubbles
- Unusual color
- Chalky or milky appearance
- Unusual odor
- Dead fish



Volunteers removed 2 tons of trash from Charlotte's creeks during Big Sweep 2012.



Charlotte-Mecklenburg

water
watchers

Storm Water Services Volunteer Programs



Storm Drain Marking

Storm Drain Marking lets passers-by know that what goes down a storm drain goes directly to a creek. Volunteers mark drains with the message: "Only Rain Goes Down the Storm Drain". Illegal dumping down a storm drain can be reported to 311 or via the Water Watchers App.



Volunteer Monitoring

Volunteers receive specialized training to test water quality at an adopted monitoring location. They test for pH, temperature, nutrients and conductivity. They also take observations and identify aquatic life that might be living in the water.



Big Sweep

On the last Saturday in September every year, volunteers meet at one of several locations around Charlotte to remove trash from local creeks and lakes. For up to four hours, volunteers bring in tons of trash including bottles, toys, bags and typically some other unusual items too.



Adopt-A-Stream

Adopting a stream means that a group of volunteers like a boy scout troop or office co-workers agree to clean up their adopted stretch of stream at least twice a year. Storm Water Services provides bags and gloves, the volunteers send back observations and removed piles of trash. In exchange for their commitment, a sign is placed near their adopted stream.