



gwinnettcounty

Department of **Water Resources**

Let's Be a Team and Adopt a Stream

The United States Environmental Protection Agency estimates there are 3.5 million miles of rivers and streams covering a substantial amount of land in our country. Rivers, streams and lakes play a vital role in the aquatic ecosystem by providing habitat, food and shelter for aquatic species, many of which are the foundation of the food chain. Additionally, they are often our main sources of drinking water, as Lake Lanier is for the city of Grayson and Gwinnett County. Sadly, many of these streams and other surface waters are where pollution and litter are often found. Streams are highly vulnerable to environmental degradation from non-point source pollution, which washes into storm drains with runoff during rain events. These drains lead directly to rivers, lakes and streams, and connect our everyday behaviors to the health of the natural environment around us.

To help maintain and protect good water quality, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's Adopt-A-Stream (AAS) volunteer program empowers residents with the tools they need to monitor the condition of local streams. Locally, the AAS program is administered through a partnership between Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful and the Gwinnett County Department of Water Resources. Volunteers receive training on water quality monitoring, including chemical, biological, and bacterial sampling. Then every month, they can track the health of a waterway that they care about. Data from this program is input into the EPD database to be used as part of the assessment of all of Georgia's surface waters.

Another aspect of AAS is the storm drain stenciling program, through which volunteers are encouraged to stencil NO DUMPING LEADS TO STREAM on each catch basin in their neighborhood and distribute educational door hangers to all the homes. The stenciling program alerts residents to the connection between the roads, our yards, and the streams, and reminds them that their actions directly affect aquatic life and water quality.

To find out more and learn how you can get involved in Adopt-A-Stream, visit www.gwinnettcg.org/adopt-a-stream or call 770.822.5187.

