

To Conserve and Protect

The environment is a popular cause. No one comes out *against* the environment. We all want to protect the environment. We all want to conserve the resources that we have and to use them as efficiently as possible. We want to ensure that resources are replenished and not destroyed by overuse.

It's easy to say that. It is not as easy for us, as individuals and families, to know what *we* can do to help. What direct action can families and individuals do that can actually make a difference? There are four areas where you and I can make a difference. The categories overlap; some things help in more than one of these areas.

These are simple changes to behavior. There are also ways to invest money that will give a payback in reducing water needs, such as low-flow plumbing fixtures.

Conserving Water Inside

- Only run washing machines and dishwashers with full loads.
- Turn water off while shaving or brushing teeth.
- Check for leaks. If any are found, fix them promptly. Leaks do not go away, they get worse.

Conserving Water Outside

- Water your lawn *only* as much as it needs. An average of one inch of rainfall or equivalent per week is all that is needed.
- Toughen your turf by watering no more than twice a week when there is not rain. Watering too often creates turf that is irrigation dependent because the root system is too shallow. Watering too much damages more lawns than watering too little.
- Set your lawn mower higher and use less fertilizer to reduce need for water.

Protecting Sanitary Sewers

- Do not put grease down any drains at any time. It will accumulate and cause blockages that can result in raw sewage backing up or overflowing from sewers. The City has a Fats Oil and Grease program enforcing proper installation and operation of grease traps at restaurants that are on the City sewers. Families can do their part to help in this area.
- Remember that any stoppages caused by something **you** put down the drain are **your** responsibility. If it is on your property, you must pay a plumber to clear it. If a user puts anything down the drain that causes a stoppage on the building sewer on public property or a stoppage in a main, the City of Brunswick is authorized by City Code to collect reimbursement from that user for all costs involved in investigation and cleanup.
- Do not put toxic or otherwise hazardous materials down drains at any time. This includes solvents, paints, pesticides, gas and oil. The City Industrial Pretreatment Program regulates industries on its system to prevent this from happening on a large scale. For the last annual reporting period, all of the Significant Industrial Users complied with their industrial pretreatment permits. They are spending time and money to limit their discharges. You can do the same. It is still important to keep dangerous materials out of sewers from residences.

Protecting Waterways

- Protecting sewers from anything that may cause overflows of raw sewage also protects streams, rivers and the ocean from pollution.
- Never dispose of anything by dumping it into storm drains. Storm sewers drain to waterways; anything put in them pollutes.
- Controlling outside water use to avoid runoff also helps by reducing pollution caused by contaminants being washed into drains, either directly or when it rains.

The City of Brunswick Water and Wastewater Department is fully committed to proper stewardship of our water resources and protection of area waterways. However, a utility cannot do everything. Protecting the environment requires the involvement of everyone. It all begins with you.

The items above recap some of the information provided in earlier articles. These are available on the City of Brunswick web site and on request from the Office of the Director.

Water and Wastewater offices of the City of Brunswick are back in City Hall at 601 Gloucester Street. Customer Service, for paying bills, opening changing and closing accounts, are on the first floor (street entry level). Telephone numbers will remain the same. Customer Service main number is (912) 267-5511. Office of the Director is on the second floor. The elevator is on the Reynolds Street side. There are stairs by the elevator and another set of stairs on the Union Street Side. The main telephone for the Office of the Director is (912) 267-5509.

For more information on the Web:

City of Brunswick Water Department

Georgia Water Conservation Program

Georgia Pollution Prevention Assistance Division

(Fats Oil and Grease)

US Environmental Protection Agency (Runoff pollution).

http://brunswickga.org/nm/publish/news_4.phtml/

<http://www.conservewatergeorgia.net/index.htm>

http://www.dnr.state.ga.us/dnr/p2ad/h_fog_initiative.html

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/>