

What is Stormwater? - Gold Coast -

December 2007

What is Stormwater?

Stormwater is any water that runs off into the drains every time it rains. Oils, detergents, pesticides, fertilisers, grass cuttings, animal waste and soil are flushed down our street drains, through the stormwater system and discharged into rivers, creeks, canals, beaches and oceans.

Stormwater is not wastewater (refer to 'What is Wastewater?' information sheet). It flows into our waterways untreated with the capacity to cause widespread ecological damage depending on the quality of the stormwater.



Image: Stormwater runoff flows into the surf (SMH 2007)

In the past...

During the 1980s stormwater management included stripping the vegetation around stormwater drains to maximise the hydraulic effects and allowing the water to flow faster reducing flooding and the build up of stormwater. This is now seen as a problem because the water flowing into the drains contains pollutants and while travelling at such high speeds over concrete and other hard surfaces, it becomes difficult to remove the pollutants once in the drainage system.

Now...

The solution to the problem is to reduce stormwater pollution before it enters the system through community education and showing people that they can make a difference.

What does Council do?

The Gold Coast City Council's (GCCC) Urban Stormwater Initiative (USI) project was implemented in 2001 to improve water quality in the central Carrara catchment area by installing Stormwater Quality Improvement Devices (SQIDs) to treat the urban runoff and thereby improving the quality of stormwater before it enters the waterways and ocean.

Gold Coast City Council spend approximately \$286,000 per year on new SQIDs. These include devices such as trash racks, gully pit devices, grosse pollutant traps and constructed wetlands.

Gully Pit Devices – collect litter, leaves and other large pollutants in baskets within the gully pit at the side of the road.



Image: Gully Pit Device – Lawrence Drive

Grosse Pollutant Traps – remove litter and large particles of sediment, help remove some nutrients, heavy metals and organic compounds that are bound to finer sediment.

Trash Racks – remove large litter and objects such as bottles.



Image: Trash Rack

Bio-retention Systems – are an innovative solution to improving stormwater quality. The process is to divert stormwater into a gravel trench, where it will be filtered and become available to the biofilm or microbe 'bugs' that break down pollutants into environmentally acceptable products.



Image: Bio-retention System – Spencer Road

Constructed Wetlands – remove some very small particles of sediments, nutrients and heavy metals from stormwater before it reaches the natural waterways.



Image: Constructed Wetland – Waterbird Park Sedimentation Lake

Stream Restoration and Vegetation Rehabilitation – stabilising the banks of streams and creeks by improving the health of riparian vegetation. This is achieved by maximising the number of mature trees and increased stabilisation of the soil and vegetation by placing logs parallel to the water flow. This process will assist in reducing erosion, improving infiltration of stormwater and reducing the sediment loads within stormwater.



Image: Riparian Vegetation Rehabilitation – Bunyip Brook

All Gold Coast residents are responsible for reducing stormwater pollution.

Get stormwater smart today!

Contact Information

For any further information on Stormwater or to book at CoastEd session on this topic please contact GCCM on (07) 5552 8506 or email us at gccm@griffith.edu.au.

For more Gold Coast City Council information please refer to their website www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au.