



WATERSHED PROTECTION PLAN SwIM Program (Stormwater Inlet Marking Program)

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The San Jacinto River Authority's (SJRA) Lake Conroe Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) was completed approximately one year ago in May of 2015. The WPP's primary focus is to lay out strategies for protecting the excellent water quality in Lake Conroe for years to come. Public education is one portion of the WPP, and a highly impactful one at that.

SJRA recognizes that multiple strategies are necessary to accomplish a task as complex as protecting water quality in a large reservoir, and educating the public on how they can contribute to achieving that goal is key to accomplishing such a challenging feat.

One specific strategy that depends heavily on public education relates to storm drains. There is often a misunderstanding regarding where the street drains and stormwater inlets lead and what they are connected to. Very few people actually understand these types of underground conveyance systems.

Underground Conveyance Systems

There are two primary underground conveyance systems that move water away from our homes, and they are VERY different.

1. Sanitary sewer system

a. Designed to transport wastewater from the sinks, showers, toilets, and other drains in our homes.

b. Goes to a sewage treatment facility, and then the treated effluent is sent to bayous and rivers. KEY → treatment!

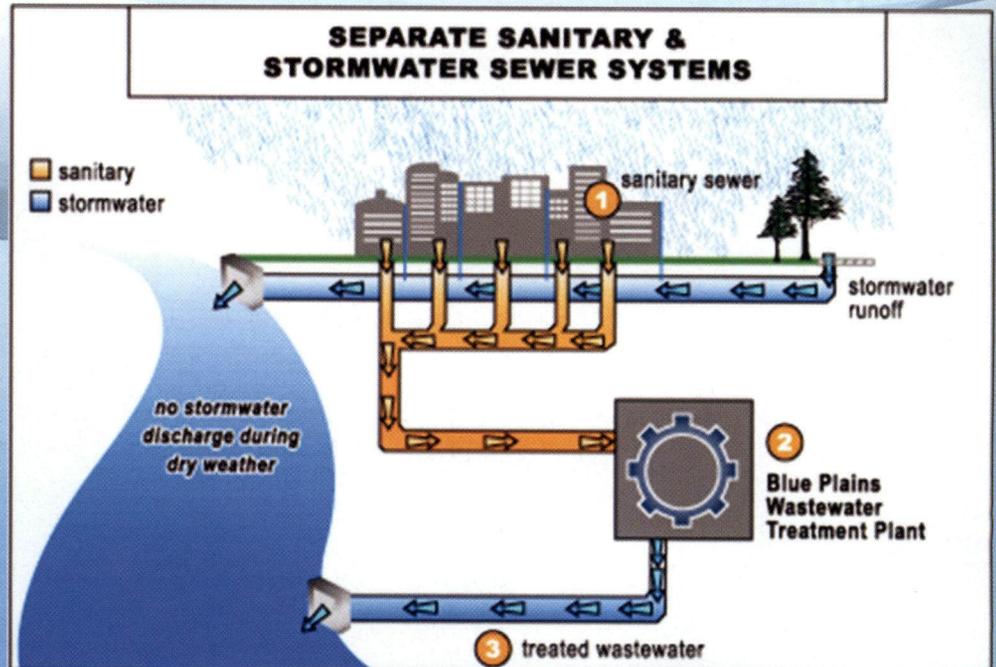
2. Stormwater drainage system

a. Designed to transport rainwater from yards and streets.

b. Goes directly into streams, and ultimately into Lake Conroe. Key → no treatment!

In the public outreach portion of the WPP, there is a specific section for stormwater inlet education. SJRA has decided to implement a Stormwater Inlet Marking (SwIM) program for a number of neighborhoods around Lake Conroe. SJRA will first conduct a small pilot SwIM program to gather data to increase efficiency and create the best plan for future markings. SJRA hopes to eventually expand the SwIM program throughout the San Jacinto watershed.

SwIM programs have been implemented all across the nation in numerous watersheds. SJRA will practice the same success-



fully-proven ideas of other agencies' similar programs. The program will create awareness on the effects of dumping inappropriate materials into storm water inlets. Other identified goals are:

- Raise awareness of water quality in San Jacinto watershed communities.
- Encourage citizens to protect their water resources.
- Involve communities in reducing non-point source pollution.
- Build alliances by working together to solve a common problem.

Materials

SJRA will purchase 4-inch aluminum medallions with a green and blue color scheme. With the assistance of volunteers and SJRA staff, the medallions will be attached to the concrete stormwater inlets in selected neighborhoods. SJRA's website will be on the marker as well and will include additional information about water quality and stormwater pollution prevention. The aluminum medallion lasts much longer than plastic or stenciled messages.

Pilot SwIM Program Specs

The pilot program will include approximately 56 inlets in four neighborhoods around Lake Conroe.

Pollution Source SwIM Targets

Stormwater run-off from urban areas can carry pollution generated by:

- Littering
- Construction activity
- Use of pesticides and fertilizers
- Illegal disposal of used oil and toxics
- New development and redevelopment

For more information on the Watershed Protection Plan, the Stormwater Inlet Marking Program, or the SJRA, please visit www.sjra.net. ♦

