



THE MAIN DRAIN

STORMWATER NEWS YOU CAN USE

A Publication of the Portsmouth Department of Public Utilities/Public Works -
Division of Stormwater Management
FEBRUARY 2004

CITY HONORED AS LOCAL RIVERSTAR

City recognized for continued achievement in pollution prevention & habitat restoration

On January 15, 2004, the City's Division of Stormwater Management received a Sustained Distinguished Performance Award through The Elizabeth River Project's (ERP) River Star Program. Held at the Renaissance Portsmouth Hotel, the Annual Recognition Luncheon highlighted the achievements of area businesses, industries and community leaders in pollution prevention, habitat conservation and restoration.

ERP's River Star Program recognizes the business and industry community for their ongoing or innovative work towards pollution prevention, pollution cleanup and habitat restoration and helps participants carry out wildlife habitat projects and pursue alternatives to pollution with technical assistance.

There are three levels within the River Star Program: Commitment, Achievement and Model. The City was previously recognized as an Achievement

Level River Star. Achievement River Stars document significant results in pollution prevention AND wildlife habitat.

This year, the City was recognized for their continued work toward pollution prevention and habitat conservation, namely with construction of a four acre stormwater retention pond with native wetland plants designed to treat runoff from the 35-acre future Portsmouth Commerce Park.

The City actively participated in the development and implementation of ERP's national recognized watershed restoration plan known as *Paradise Found, Paradise Creek Restoration Plan*.

Portsmouth also just completed an impressive study of the city's stormwater management program which will result in a more comprehensive and proactive approach to stormwater management issues.

The Stormwater Management Division hopes to advance within the Rivers Star program and

become recognized by ERP as a *Model Level River Star* in 2004.

This level is achieved by organizations and industries which have achieved exceptional pollution prevention and wildlife habitat results, while mentoring community leaders in environmental stewardship.

The Stormwater Division has lots of activities and events planned to help us achieve this goal. Keep your eyes on future issues of *The Main Drain* to follow our efforts and progress.



Stormwater Administrator, **Cindy Linkenhoker**, accepts a Sustained Distinguished Performance award for the City from ERP's, Princess Elizabeth (**Robin Dunbar**).

STORMWATER TIP OF THE MONTH:

BE A GOOD CARWASHER! DON'T LET STORMWATER RUN TO DRAINS!

Water from washing your car contains soaps, chemicals, oil and grit—all of which are harmful to the environment. And, it is illegal for this runoff to enter the storm drain system where it travels, untreated to local lakes, rivers, streams and the Chesapeake Bay. **Wash your car on your lawn.** The grass acts like a sponge, filtering out the pollutants and reducing the amount of water that enters the drainage system.

What is this Stuff Called Stormwater?

Do you know where the water goes when it rains?



How about the water you use when you wash your car or water the lawn? Some of this water soaks into the ground but the rest of it *runs off* the land surface. It is this *runoff* water that we call *Stormwater*. Stormwater, by itself, is not harmful to our environment. But as it travels across lawns, rooftops, roadways, and parking lots it picks up a variety of pollutants such as fertilizers, motor oils, sediments, trash and yard debris. All this "stuff" ends up in the nearest drainage inlet and subsequently discharges, **UNTREATED**, into nearby receiving waterways, such as

the Elizabeth River.

Polluted stormwater can harm fish, wildlife and plants, and can even contaminate drinking water. In fact, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that at least 50% of our nation's water pollution is caused by polluted stormwater runoff! And if that's not bad enough, the "BIG stuff" in stormwater - like trash, leaves and grass clippings, contributes to street flooding by blocking drainage inlets and clogging underground storm drainage pipes.

Each of us can contribute to the problem, sometimes without even realizing it. You can help reduce pollution by remembering to keep potential pollutants away from storm drains. For more information contact the City's Stormwater Management Division at 393-8691.

STORMWATER POLLUTION PATROL: Taking Portsmouth By Storm



Police officers and fire marshals are now serving an expanded role as the City's first STORMWATER POLLUTION PATROL - empowered to enforce the Stormwater Code and protect our storm drainage system from polluters!

At a recent City Council meeting, a new City Code section, entitled 31.1-3(d), was added to allow for these increased enforcement capabilities. Section 31.1-3(b) was also revised to "up" the penalties from a "Class 3 misdemeanor" to a "misdemeanor" and raise the fine for polluting the storm drainage system from \$500 per violation to \$1,000, or 30 days jail time, per violation.

So let your friends and neighbors know that our

STORMWATER POLLUTION PATROL is looking for a few "good" violators!

To make sure YOU don't get caught in the storm, follow these helpful tips:

- o **Do not pour ANYTHING into a storm drainage inlet, the street or in the gutter pan!**
- o **Do not allow any pipe or hose to be discharged from your home or business into a storm drainage inlet, the street or in the gutter pan!**
- o **Do not put leaves, trash, debris or ANYTHING into a storm drainage inlet, the street or in the gutter pan!**

And if you'd like to help us fight the battle of pollution prevention, don't hesitate to call the STORMWATER POLLUTION PATROL to report a violation at the Police Department's non-emergency line: 757-393-5300.

Erosion & Sediment Control Training Proves Useful for City Employees

Erosion and Sediment Control (E&SC) is serious business for the City of Portsmouth. In an effort to educate city staff about aspects of city and state E&SC laws, the Division of Stormwater Management sponsored a 4-hour workshop for all city departments.

Held on February 12,

2004 at the Public Utilities Operation Center, 48 employees from nine city divisions/ departments and three private contractors/ consultants attended the well-received training.

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) staff, Art Kirkby and Al Gregg, lead the group through the basics of E&SC

laws, regulations, standards and controls.

The Stormwater Division would like to extend a special thank you to Public Utilities employee **Ventry Smith**, who provided excellent assistance in facility coordination and workshop setup. Future training on stormwater management, ordinances and



City staff listen to presentations on Erosion and Sediment Control.

illicit discharges are planned. For more information on future trainings, call 393-8691.



IT'S JUST DIRT!

A Layperson's Guide to Erosion & Sediment Control (E&SC)

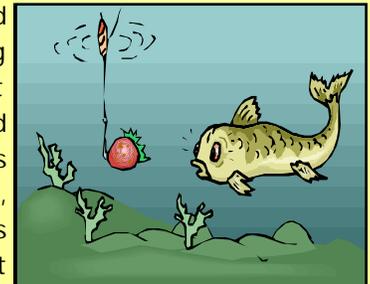
When vegetation and topsoil are stripped from a construction site, erosion is sure to follow. Exposed soil, or dirt, erodes when there's nothing to protect it from rain and wind. This eroded dirt doesn't just disappear. It usually ends up in a nearby waterway, where it eventually settles to the bottom to become sediment. In fact, this sediment just might find its way to your favorite fishing hole, smothering fish eggs and fouling the water. The rate of erosion on most construction sites is 500 times greater than what would occur naturally on an undisturbed, vegetated site. That's why urban land development is a major source of sediment pollution. In fact, by volume, sediment is currently the greatest pollutant of Virginia's rivers and streams.

You might wonder why plain, old dirt is considered a contaminant. It pollutes by clouding waters, obstructing waterways, clogging storm pipes, damaging adjacent properties and interfering with navigation. Successful minimization of these impacts can be achieved by implementing erosion and sediment control (E&SC) measures on construction sites to prevent soil movement/loss in the first place. Virginia was among the first states to specifically address E&SC from construction sites by establishing a mandatory E&SC program nearly 30 years ago. The VA Department of

Conservation and Recreation implements the state E&SC Program according to the *Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Law, Regulations, and Certification Regulations* (VESCL&R). The E&SC Program's goal is to control soil erosion, sedimentation, and nonagricultural runoff from regulated "land-disturbing activities" to prevent degradation of property and natural resources. Please refer to DCR's website for more information on the E&SC program: <http://www.dcr.state.va.us/sw/e&s.htm>

What should you do? Keep **your dirt on your project!** Install erosion and sediment controls properly and at the beginning of construction. And maintain the controls throughout the project.

What about Permits? Any land disturbance of 2500 square feet or more requires a Land Disturbance Permit from the City's Engineering Department. To get the permit, an Erosion & Sediment Control Plan that meets the City's and DCR's requirements must be submitted and approved by the Engineering Department. To find out more about the land disturbance permit fees and plan requirements, please call the City's Engineering Department at (757) 393-8592 or review the City's Erosion & Sediment Control ordinance online at: www.portsmouthva.gov/docs/citycode.htm.



Community Outreach Spotlight —Women's Club of Churchland

On February 4, 2003, staff from the City's Stormwater Management Division had the honor to be guest speakers at a Women's Club of Churchland luncheon. City Stormwater Administrator, **Cindy Linkenhoker**, and Stormwater Inspector, **Nicole Sandberg**, were recognized for their work on educating and involving the public in stormwater pollution prevention.

Ms. Linkenhoker presented the women with an overview of the City's stormwater program, including information on causes and sources of stormwater pollution and the activities the City is involved in to tackle this city-wide problem. Information was distributed describing how citizens can make informed decisions to positively affect our area's lakes and rivers.

The luncheon represented a reunion of the two groups, as representatives of the Women's Club participated in the City's November 2003 "Victory Wetland Planting" at the new stormwater ponds off Victory Blvd. The City extends a special thanks to Conservation Chairwoman, **Ms. Evie Green**.



Women's Club of Churchland's Conservation Chairwoman, **Evie Green**, listens as City Stormwater Inspector **Nicole Sandberg**, provides information on how to prevent stormwater pollution.

ATTENTION TEACHERS:

FREE Educational CD "ECO MASTERS" Available

Get your FREE copy of "EcoMasters", a fun, interactive computer game for teachers and students alike.

Created by the Regional Stormwater Education Group, HR STORM, *EcoMasters* has been designed specifically for the Hampton Roads Region.

As students play, they will see many different sources of water pollution and everyone's role in prevention. *EcoMasters* also shows how our homes, schools, businesses and streets are all connected to the Earth's creeks, rivers, bays and oceans.

Structured to coincide with the SOLs, *EcoMasters* is designed to increase student's awareness of general water pollution issues and prompt individual action to enhance their community through improved water quality.

To get a free CD copy of the game and teachers manual, please call 393-8691 or e-mail the Stormwater Division at: stormwater@portsmouthva.gov.

Applications Being Accepted for Mini-Grants Program

The Hampton Roads Environmental Education Teams (HRWET, HRSTORM and HRCLEAN) offer competitive mini-grants of up to \$250 each year to provide supplemental funding for environmentally-related projects. All school teachers (K-12) and youth leaders in the Hampton Roads region are eligible.

All projects should be specifically tied to litter prevention, waste minimization and recycling or beautification; or water conservation, pollution prevention and efficiency.

For a list of appropriate topic areas, more information and access to the easy-to-fill-out application, refer to the HR STORM website at: <http://www.hrstorm.org/MiniGrant.shtml>



THE CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

THE MAIN DRAIN

The Main Drain is a publication that addresses local Stormwater and Erosion and Sediment Control issues and is produced by The City of Portsmouth, Department of Public Utilities / Public Works - Division of Stormwater Management.

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NAME THAT BIRD!

An Environmental Conservation Contest for Hampton Roads Residents

The Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC), and the regional environmental education groups known as HRSTORM, HRWET, and HRCLEAN announce a mascot bird naming contest for the Hampton Roads Region. These groups are developing an environmental activity guide for area schools and environmental organizations and need a name for their feathery mascot. This contest is open to residents of all ages. The winner will receive a \$50.00 savings bond. For more information or contest rules, please check out the

HRSTORM website: www.hrstorm.org

DEADLINE: March 12th, 2004

