Be Watershed Wise

As a leader in environmental stewardship, the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) has developed an environmental awareness initiative designed to provide general watershed education to the residents of the San Antonio River Basin community and to inform citizens about ways they can help protect and preserve the environment of the San Antonio River and its tributaries. This new environmental awareness initiative will encourage residents to “Be Watershed Wise” through a series of messages addressing issues such as general watershed education, prevention of illegal dumping, encouraging recycling and reducing the use of plastic bags, picking up your pet waste, proper lawn care and vehicle maintenance techniques and others.

The “Be Watershed Wise” initiative takes a multi-faceted approach to public outreach. SARA created the Creek Book to provide helpful hints and tips (also known as Best Management Practices) for everyday use that are suggested as ways individuals can aid in improving watersheds. There is a “Be Watershed Wise” poster available for children to learn simple lessons designed to protect watersheds. SARA’s quarterly newsletter, River Reach, contains articles related to the agency as well as information for the public that will encourage individuals to “Be Watershed Wise.” At community events that SARA attends, you can stop by to speak with a SARA staff member.

Keeping our yards and streets clean keeps our creeks and rivers clean. BE WATERSHED WISE.

Take your groceries home in reusable bags. Disposable plastic bags are wasteful and sometimes end up in our creeks and rivers.

Don’t...
Don’t use disposable paper or plastic bags for grocery shopping.

Do...
Do take your own reusable shopping bags with you to the grocery store.

Why?
Though some disposable paper bags are recyclable, many trees are still cut down to meet the high demand for these bags. Disposable plastic bags are inexpensive to produce, but require non-renewable resources such as petroleum and natural gas. Plastic bags are a serious problem because they can be found just about everywhere: in ditches, along highways, stuck in tree branches and in landfills. They also tend to make their way into our creeks and rivers. Once there, they can negatively affect habitat and wildlife.

If you have disposable plastic or paper bags, first attempt to reuse them. If that is not possible, ensure that they are recycled. Many grocery stores will take disposable plastic bags to recycle. Most grocery stores also offer reusable shopping bags for purchase. SARA also gives away free reusable shopping bags at the events in which we participate. If you make it a habit to use reusable bags at the grocery store, you can help reduce the impact paper and plastic bags have on our environment.

**If your parents work on the car at home, make sure there are containers under the car to catch any drips.**

*Don't…*

Hose down or dump any household solvent or automotive product into streets or creeks.

*Do…*

Dispose of these wastes by placing them in clean, leak-proof containers and taking them to your local hazardous waste collection site. Use water-based paints whenever possible. Wash water-based paint from brushes in the sink. For oil- or latex-based paint, wash paintbrushes in a container with thinner, then take the thinner to a hazardous waste facility. Most auto parts stores will accept used motor oil for recycling.

**Why?**

If not disposed of properly, automotive and household waste can contaminate creeks and groundwater.

**When walking your pets, pick up after them and throw the waste in the garbage. Rain can wash pet waste into our creeks and rivers, where it doesn't belong.**

*Don’t…*

Leave animal or pet waste in your yard or on the ground where you walk your pet.

*Do…*

Make sure you clean up after your pet. Carry waste bags on walks. Ideally, biodegradable bags are the best choice.

**Why?**

Animal/pet feces that are not picked up can end up in storm drains and creeks. Feces can
carry bacteria that cause disease.

**Ask your parents to wash the car at a car wash or in the grass, not on the driveway. Dirt and chemicals from cars can run off the driveway into our creeks and rivers.**

**Don't...**
Wash your vehicle in your driveway.

**Do...**
Wash your vehicle on a flat, grassy area or take it to a commercial car wash where special drains are installed to properly dispose of runoff.

**Why?**
The runoff from your driveway carries pollutants into storm drains and creeks.

**Recycle everything you can and be sure to put other trash in a garbage can with a lid. This will keep loose trash out of our creeks and rivers.**

**Don't...**
Put any trash in creeks or outside a recycling or garbage bin where wind or rain can carry it to storm drains or creek channels.

**Do...**
Place items that can be recycled into a recycling bin, and then make sure all other items go into a garbage bin with a lid.

**Why?**
Trash that is not disposed of properly can end up in creeks, obstructing flow and harming wildlife.

**When you mow the lawn, leave the grass clippings on the lawn or throw them away in trash bags. Don't sweep or blow them into the street, or they could end up in our creeks and rivers.**

**Don't...**
Dump or blow grass clippings and leaves into creeks, storm drains or streets, and don't put them in the garbage.

**Do...**
Add them to a compost pile, leave them on your yard so they can fertilize your lawn or use a curbside yard waste collection service if it is available.
Why?
Grass clippings and leaves provide nutrients to your lawn. Clippings that are carried or dumped into creeks can lead to less dissolved oxygen.

San Antonio River Authority | 100 E. Guenther, San Antonio, Texas, 78204 | 1.866.345.7272
Contact Us