



Phase II Stormwater Program

Winter 2016

Stormwater and its Effects

Didn't it rain.

The end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016 so far has been a period of exceptional rainfall. In December of 2015 alone, we received 16.4 inches as measured at the city engineering office. This is well in excess of normal rainfalls for this time of year. To compound that, the *frequency* of rainfall events has been such that the ground remains saturated when the next rainfall event occurs, making runoff problems worse than more widely dispersed events. The difficulties have been widely covered in the local media.



Riverwalk near the Amphitheater—December 30, 2015

While we can't control the rainfall, we can take some control of runoff in our area. The Chattahoochee watershed begins with its headwaters well north of Atlanta and ends at Apalachicola Bay in Florida. All along this watershed are many cities and towns that each contribute water and sadly, pollutants as well.

“An estimated 10 trillion gallons a year of untreated stormwater runs off roofs, roads, parking lots, and other paved surfaces, often through the sewage systems, into rivers and waterways that serve as drinking water supplies and flow to our beaches, increasing health risks, degrading ecosystems, and damaging tourist economies. But cities of all sizes are saving money by employing green infrastructure as part of their solutions to stormwater pollution and sewage overflow problems.”

Green infrastructure helps stop runoff pollution by capturing rainwater and either storing it for use or letting it filter back into the ground, replenishing vegetation and groundwater supplies. Examples of green infrastructure include green roofs, street trees, increased green space, rain barrels, rain gardens, and permeable pavement. These solutions have the added benefits of beautifying neighborhoods, cooling and cleansing the air, reducing asthma and heat-related illnesses, lowering heating and cooling energy costs, boosting economies, and supporting American jobs.” - Source: Natural Resource Defense Council.