

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is stormwater pollution?

Stormwater pollution is anything other than rainwater that enters a storm drain.

2. Where do stormwater pollutants come from?

Stormwater pollutants originate from many human activities including lawn care, construction, and vehicle maintenance. Some examples of pollutants found in stormwater include:

- Pesticides
- Nutrients
- Petroleum products
- Sediments
- Detergents
- Solvents
- Heavy metals
- Litter

3. How can stormwater pollution adversely affect the environment?

Toxic materials including petroleum products, pesticides, detergents, and other chemicals can harm aquatic ecosystems by killing organisms including fish, shellfish, and vegetation.

Nutrients including the nitrogen and phosphorus found in fertilizers and animal waste can cause an overgrowth of algae, which can drive out indigenous plants and animals. In addition, when the algae die off, the decaying matter can deplete the water body of oxygen, killing fish and other aquatic organisms.

Sediments deposited to waterways by stormwater runoff increases the turbidity of waters and limits the depth to which light can penetrate, thereby decreasing the inhabitable space that aquatic vegetation can survive. Sediments can also settle on, and smother, existing vegetation.

4. To what water bodies does the stormwater from USF's storm sewer discharge?

Rain runoff entering USF's storm sewers flows into Castor Pond and East Pond on the east side of campus and Simmons Pond and Lake Benhnke on the west side of campus. These intermediate ponds discharge into nearby area wetlands, which discharge to the Hillsborough River and eventually Tampa Bay.

5. Who is affected by stormwater pollution?

Everyone can be affected by stormwater pollution including boaters, fishermen, and anyone who enjoys the natural beauty of the Tampa Bay area. In addition, the Hillsborough River is our primary source of drinking water.

6. Who regulates stormwater runoff?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates stormwater runoff through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). EPA authorized the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to implement the NPDES Stormwater Permitting Program in October of 2000. FDEP is responsible for issuing permits and performing compliance and enforcement activities as the NPDES permitting authority in Florida. There are two phases of the NPDES Stormwater Program.

7. What is the difference between the two phases of the NPDES Stormwater Program?

Phase I of the NPDES Stormwater Program was promulgated in 1990. It requires large and medium municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) located in incorporated counties with a population of 100,000 or more to obtain NPDES permits.

Phase II of the NPDES Stormwater Program was promulgated in 1999. It requires MS4s not regulated by Phase I and small construction activities to obtain NPDES permits and develop comprehensive stormwater management programs that will eliminate illicit discharges to MS4s and reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff. USF is a part of the Phase II MS4 program.

8. What are USF's requirements under the NPDES Phase II MS4 permit?

As part of the permit application, USF submitted a list of best management practices (BMPs) that fulfill the various elements required as part of a comprehensive storm water management program. These BMPs are to be phased-in over a period of five years and include the following elements:

1. Public education and outreach
 2. Public involvement and participation
 3. Illicit discharge detection and elimination
 4. Construction site stormwater runoff control, and
 5. Pollution prevention and good housekeeping
- [USF Stormwater MS4 Permit](#)

9. What is an illicit discharge?

An illicit discharge is any discharge to a municipal separate storm sewer that is not rain water. MS4s are not designed to process or discharge such wastes. Some sources of illicit discharges include the improper disposal of mechanical fluids and toxic chemicals, improper disposal of debris, and the discharge of industrial wastewaters into storm sewer systems.

10. Who can be contacted if an illicit discharge is observed?

Illicit discharges can be reported to:

- Environmental Health and Safety: (813) 974-4036
- University Police:
Tampa (813) 974-2628 | St. Pete (727) 873-4444 | Sarasota-Manatee (941) 487-4210

11. What are some things that can be done to protect the quality of USF's stormwater?

View the [USF Community Good Housekeeping Practices](#) document