The pilot program is the first step in an ongoing regional scale storm drain marking project. In future months, additional volunteer groups will continue to mark drains throughout the local communities. Previously marked sites will also be monitored to gather additional data in order to explore the effectiveness of the markers with regard to the amount and type of debris found in drains.

Storm drain marking promotes public awareness about the transport of various types of pollution directly into the local waterways. This pollution includes litter, yard debris, oil, fertilizer and pesticides, sediment, and other harmful contaminants. Storm drain markers serve as a reminder for practices and behaviors that reduce water pollution, and improve the quality of the water.

In December 2009, Coastal Carolina University undergraduate interns unveiled the storm drain marking pilot program at the Coastal Waccamaw Stormwater Education Consortium biannual meeting to its members which include local stormwater managers, their staff, and elected and appointed officials.

Prior to marking storm drains, appropriate sites are chosen by stormwater staff and scouted by the interns. Once a location has been selected, the volunteer group participating is given an educational PowerPoint presentation, followed by a hands-on activity using the EnviroScape® watershed model. This model is an effective tool for illustrating regional stormwater issues and human impacts on local waterways.

Local stormwater managers expressed the importance of data collection as a component of the pilot storm drain marking program. A data sheet (shown below) was designed and compiled during the planning stage. This sheet is used by volunteer groups to identify current conditions, the GPS locations of the storm drains being marked, and the types of debris items seen in or around the drains.

All information collected is shared with the local stormwater departments. This sheet will also be used for future follow-up data collection at the previously marked sites.

Since April 2010, 7 site locations (~300 drains) throughout Horry and Georgetown Counties and their adjacent municipalities have been marked.

The storm drain marking project strives to raise awareness about polluted stormwater and its effects on the environment, but also assists local communities in meeting National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II permit requirements.

The pilot program is the first step in an on-going regional scale storm drain marking project. In future months, additional volunteer groups will continue to mark drains throughout the local communities. Previously marked sites will also be monitored to gather additional data in order to explore the effectiveness of the markers with regard to the amount and type of debris found in drains.

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Media

One of this program’s major objectives is to increase the knowledge of the citizens and visitors of our area about polluted runoff. Media coverage is advantageous in capturing the public’s attention. Over the last 6 months, the storm drain marking program has made its way into the headlines.

Before any of the 7 sites had been marked, news channel WMBF-TV 10 interviewed the interns for over 3 minutes on live 5pm news in their Myrtle Beach studio.

Additional coverage included: regional Time Warner Cable’s Palmetto People news segment; WPDE-TV 15 Carolina Live and WBTW-TV 13 evening news; Coastal Carolina University’s Coastal Today show; Horry Independent newspaper; WMBF-TV 10, WBTW-TV 13 and the University’s websites; and City of Conway’s community television channel.

Findings

- Leaves and Plastic Items (wrappers, bottles, bags)
- Cigarette Butts and Paper Trash
- Leaves and Sediment
- Excess Vegetative Growth and Pine Needles
- Leaves and Sediment
- Cigarette Butts and Sediment
- Leaves and Cigarette Butts

Expansion throughout the region