

Do a Number on Cleaning Up the New River

1. Get Involved

Studies by the Department of Planning & Environmental Protection (DPEP) have shown that the New River has severe pollution problems. You may not be aware of it, but all of our activities on land (like home maintenance, driving, boating and gardening) impact the New River, its tributaries and surrounding canals. Our individual contributions may seem small, but by making small changes in our daily habits, together with 1.3 million other Broward County citizens, we can clean up the New River. To find out how you can get involved, call the DPEP at 519-1400.

2. Report Environmental Polluters

The DPEP maintains a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week environmental response team. Citizens who live, work or play on the River must be the eyes and ears of environmental enforcement. If you see a pollution source or if you see someone polluting **CALL IMMEDIATELY**. To report during business hours call 519-1499 or after-hours/ weekends 765-5124.

3. Keep Trash Debris and Clippings Out Of The River

Don't be a litter bug! It is a lot easier to keep trash and debris out of the river than to clean it up from the River. Keep trash and debris away from the River banks or docks where wind will blow it into the River. Grass, shrubs and tree cuttings should never be blown or raked into the River. When these "bio-degrade" they release unwanted nutrients into the River and the decomposition process robs needed oxygen from the water. For more information call the DPEP Water Resources Division at 519-1270.

4. Report Sewage Leaks And Suspect Flow In Storm Drains

If a sewer line breaks or backs up, report it immediately to your utility department. If you notice a storm drain that has flow during dry weather conditions, this may be an indication of a sewage cross connect. A cross connect may exist where sewer lines are routed adjacent to stormwater pipes and an inadvertent connection is made. Again, report this to the utility department of your city.

5. Pump — Don't Dump

Sewage discharge from boats adds to the pollution in the River. Do not flush marine toilets into the River. Boaters with on-board toilets should use a sanitary marine pump-out station for disposal of sewage. Even US Coast Guard approved Marine Sanitation Devices (MSD's) cause degradation of the River, especially in high density live-aboard areas. Always pump-out your waste or use on-shore toilet facilities. Many of these pump-out facilities are free. For more information regarding pump-out facilities call the DPEP Water Resources Division at 519-1270.

6. Control Non-Point Source Pollution and Storm Water Runoff

Rainwater can carry fertilizers, pesticides, animal wastes, and toxic chemicals into the River. By keeping rainwater in your yard, you improve water quality, reduce erosion, replenish the groundwater supply, and reduce the need for fertilizers. Trees, shrubs and ground cover should be planted as a buffer around your yard. Street swales are very important in controlling runoff. Maintain the grass on your swale to reduce run-off. Call DPEP Water Resources Division at 519-1270 for more information.

7. Control Pests Sensibly

Take special care when applying pesticides and fertilizers in your yard. Reduce habitat for unwanted insects and vectors by eliminating trash and debris. Properly dispose of tires to prevent mosquitoes from breeding. Follow pesticide directions carefully and buy only what you need. Do not apply pesticides near water or if rain is forecast. A better way to eliminate harmful garden bugs is to encourage helpful bugs and animals. For advise on encouraging helpful bugs and the use of pesticides call the Broward County Cooperative Extension at 370-3725.

8. Plant A Tree Or A Shrub

Planting a native tree or shrub is one of the easiest ways to help the New River. Trees and shrubs improve our air quality, provide invaluable habitat for wildlife, and soak up nutrients before they enter the River. Broward County and all municipalities have tree protection ordinances to protect and restore our tree canopy. For information call DPEP Biological Resources Division at 519-1230 or Broward County Cooperative Extension at 370-3725.

9. Volunteer To Restore The River

Participate in events, such as Waterways Clean-up which is held each spring. Become involved with existing litter reduction programs such as Keep America Beautiful, Broward Clean and Beautiful and Florida Greenways Programs. Develop an Adopt a River Program for New River and its tributaries. These types of civic activities help promote stewardship of the River. Call DPEP at 519-1253 for more information.

10. Dispose of Household Products Carefully

Many household products like paints, wood preservatives, brush cleaners, and solvents can harm the River. Never pour them down the drain since sewers and septic tanks do not always treat these materials. Buy the product with the least amount of toxic materials. Don't overbuy; purchase quantities that can be used with no leftovers. Used turpentine and brush cleaners can be filtered and reused. Do not dispose of toxic chemicals or oil in dumpsters or in garbage cans. Leaking trash containers can pollute to the New River. Watch for upcoming Amnesty Days to dispose of hazardous materials. Call DPEP at 519-1260 for free brochures regarding household hazardous wastes or the Broward County Office of Integrated Waste Management (OIWM) for more information on Amnesty Days at 765-4202.

11. Care For Your Lawn Cautiously

Trees, shrubs, and lawns prevent erosion and soak up nutrients before they run off into storm drains and the River. Use the proper fertilizer and do not over fertilize. Water your yard only during the hours of 5:00 PM to 9:00 AM. Install moisture sensors on automatic sprinklers to prevent over watering. For information regarding native trees and shrubs call the Broward County Urban Forester at 519-1491 or the Broward County Cooperative Extension at 370-3725.

12. Protect and Restore River Bank Habitats

Mangroves create nursery areas for fish and other wildlife and reduce erosion and reflected wave energy. Protect and restore remaining natural mangrove riverbanks. When possible, replace vertical seawalls with riprap or sloping-faced sea walls. For more information call the DPEP Wetlands Section at 519-1230.

13. Save Water

Saving water helps the River by reducing the volume of water going through septic tanks and sewer systems. It also saves you money. In one day, a dripping faucet wastes 20 gallons of water and a leaking toilet 200 gallons. If your water meter dial moves when no water is running, you have a leak. Use water sparingly while brushing your teeth, washing dishes, or shaving. Install a water conservation shower head and take short showers instead of baths. Call the South Florida Water Management District at (561) 686-6785 for water conservation details.

14. Maintain Septic System

If a septic system fails, untreated waste can seep into the River and groundwater. Your system is not working properly if sinks and toilets drain slowly or if sewage seeps upward from the ground. Never use your toilet as a garbage can. Use your garbage disposal sparingly to reduce grease and solids in your septic system. Know the location of your septic system, pump out the tank regularly and keep heavy equipment off the drainage area. For a free homeowners Septic Tank Manual call 519-1270.

15. Contain Chemical Spills

If pesticides, oil, gasoline, or similar products leak or spill onto your home's garage floor, driveway or other hard surface, do not wash down the area. This will cause further contamination and may carry the material to storm drains or other water resources. Surround the contaminated area with dirt or sprinkle sawdust, kitty litter, or other absorbent material over the spill. Put the material into a strong plastic bag and put the bag in the trash. Commercial facilities may be required to dispose of spilled materials as a hazardous waste. Call DPEP at 519-1260 for more pollution prevention solutions.

16. Don't Top Off Your Gas Tank and Use Car Care Products Wisely

Topping off your tank with gas can cause spillage, which releases pollutants into the air and water. Keep your car well tuned, because dirty carburetors, clogged air filters, worn points and plugs waste gas, lower engine performance and cause increased emissions. Repair oil gaskets and seals immediately. Motor oil, anti-freeze, and battery acid harm the River if they flow into storm drains or off paved surfaces into a waterway. Contain these fluids when you change them. To dispose of these materials, contact your local service station or call OIWM at 765-4202 for recycling information.

17. Recycle

Recycling is an easy, efficient, and cost effective way to help the environment and the New River. Recycling is good for the environment because it reuses our natural resources. Recycling also helps reduce water and air pollution and helps keep trash and debris out of the River. For more information call OIWM at 765-4999, or your city.

18. Take Responsibility

If you live aboard New River or its tributaries, such as the Las Olas Isles, develop a special stewardship and responsibility for the waters beneath your keel. You are trustee of a public resource and it is your responsibility to make sure that your activities and your neighbors' activities do not jeopardize the quality of the waterway or your lifestyle.

19. Use A “Pooper Scooper”

Pet waste is a source of water pollution to the New River. It can cause bacterial pollution and increase the amount of nutrients in the water. Keep your pet’s waste away from storm drains or the water’s edge. Make an effort to collect waste and place it in the garbage.

20. Tell Your Friends

Pass on to your friends these 20 ways **YOU** can help clean up the River.

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