

## SECTION 5

# PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

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Successful implementation of the Buckhead Creek Watershed Study and stormwater management as a whole requires extensive public education and outreach. The City has taken important steps in public outreach within the Buckhead Creek watershed through the use of direct mail questionnaires, web-based applications, and public meetings. Questionnaires were mailed to residents throughout the watershed in September of 2008 requesting feedback on floodprone areas, and any water quality concerns. A web-based application linked to the City's website was also available to residents for completing the questionnaires. Compiled results of the questionnaires can be found in Appendix D. In addition to the questionnaires, City staff held a public meeting in September of 2008 to introduce the project and facilitate further feedback from the public. A follow-up meeting will be held in May of 2009 to share results of the Study with the public. The initial public feedback is critical to identifying floodprone areas and validating model results. As selected projects proceed into design and construction continuous public outreach will be critical to the success of the projects. Most of the proposed improvements include some impacts to private properties which will require permanent drainage easements and temporary construction easements. Public meetings and individual property owner meetings through the design process will help educate property owners on the benefits of the proposed projects and the temporary and permanent impacts from construction.

In addition to the public education and outreach completed for projects specific to the Buckhead Creek Watershed, the City has several programs dedicated to educating the public about water quality and pollution. The City's website provides information about the Stormwater Program and the development of the Stormwater Utility and associated fees. It also contains information about the 24-hour hotline where questions can be answered and stormwater problems related to drainage and pollution can be reported.

An additional educational measure that could be considered would be to target those City residents that live adjacent to the stream. For this select group, quarterly newsletters could be mailed presenting information regarding the importance of not illegally discharging items (i.e. yard waste, car batteries, and other miscellaneous debris) into the stream. The newsletter should encourage the residents to keep the stream clean and report any blockage.

Another approach would be coordinating with the local schools to teach the students about age appropriate stormwater issues. There are many benefits to teaching children about stormwater issues including the students relaying the information they learn in school to their parents. A presentation can be done in conjunction with an afternoon spent visiting and cleaning up the nearby stream. Adding an educational BMP near the school would be another outreach opportunity.