

PET WASTE AND WATER QUALITY

When your pet “does its business,” where does it end up? If it is left on the grass or street, it may be polluting our water.

Water samples in the urban areas of Alachua County often have high levels of bacteria that exceed State Water Quality Standards.

Are you risking your health?

Pets, children who play outside and adults who garden are most at risk for infection from bacteria and parasites in pet waste. Flies may also spread diseases from animal waste. Diseases or parasites that can be transmitted include:

- Campylobacteriosis – frequently causes diarrhea in humans.
- Hookworms - infective larvae can penetrate the skin of dogs, cats or people. In humans, it causes an itchy skin condition.
- Toxocariasis – may cause vision loss, a rash, fever or cough.
- Toxoplasmosis – symptoms include headache, muscle aches and lymph node enlargement. Can cause birth defects if a woman becomes infected during pregnancy.

www.AlachuaCountyWater.org

Alachua County Environmental Protection

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DOGS CAN'T FLUSH

Scoop the Poop, Bag it & Trash it!

Clean Creeks. Clean Yards. Clean Paws.





SCOOP IT, BAG IT, TRASH IT!



Are you polluting our lakes and creeks?

Pollutants from improperly disposed pet waste may be washed into storm drains by rain. Storm sewers usually drain directly into our lakes and creeks - carrying many pollutants along with the water.

When pet waste is washed into water bodies, the waste decays - using up oxygen and sometimes releasing ammonia. Low oxygen levels and ammonia combined with warm temperatures can kill fish.

Pet waste also contains nutrients that encourage weed and algae growth - making the water unattractive for swimming, boating and fishing. Pet waste also carries diseases that makes water unsafe for swimming or drinking.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Cleaning up after your pet can be as simple as taking a plastic bag or pooper scooper along on your next walk. Then what? Well, take your pick...

1. Put it in the trash...

Put pet waste in a sealed bag, preferably biodegradable, then put it in the trash. Landfills have liners and treatment systems, so pollutants don't leak into the environment. (Local ordinances in areas outside of Alachua County may prohibit this disposal method.)

PREFERRED

2. Flush it down the toilet...

The water from your toilet goes to a septic system or sewage treatment plant that removes most pollutants. (To prevent plumbing problems, don't flush debris such as rocks, sticks, plastic bags or excessive amounts of cat litter.)

3. Bury it in the ground...

Not ideal, but better than leaving it on top of the ground. Dig a 5" hole that's a good distance from vegetable gardens and any lake, stream, ditch or well. (Be cautious. Keep pet waste away from vegetable gardens and water supplies to prevent disease. Don't add pet waste to your compost pile. The pile won't get hot enough to kill disease organisms in pet waste.)

A FEW WORDS OF CAUTION

Around Your Home

Don't leave pet waste to decay in your yard. Alachua County Code 72 -13 requires pet owners to clean up pet wastes before they become a public nuisance. To prevent water pollution, pay special attention near wells, storm drains, ditches and waterways.

In Your Community

Alachua County has a "pooper scooper" ordinance that requires pet owners to clean up after their pets. Owners must remove their pet's waste from their own property and any other property affected before the waste becomes a public nuisance. While walking pets, bring a bag or pooper scooper along.

SCOOP IT, BAG IT, TRASH IT!



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