



Public Works Celebrates  
Earth Day 2021  
"Restore Our Earth"



Take steps to reduce  
water consumption



Start a garden



Consider reusable  
drink ware

## SPECIAL PROJECTS - Green Initiatives

We see daily evidence that our world is currently facing an environmental crisis. Government agencies and municipalities across the nation are doing their part and taking steps to address the crisis. DeKalb County is at the forefront, taking strides to tackle the issues.

The Department of Public Works' Special Projects Division, in full partnership with DeKalb's Department of Planning and Sustainability, have several innovative initiatives and policies on the horizon. These are in direct support of the County's environmental goals. The Board of Commissioners has created an Ad Hoc committee to discuss initiatives such as the following:

- ❖ No Net Loss of Trees on county property
- ❖ Renewable energy through the use of solar power
- ❖ Energy efficiency in lighting with an LED lighting policy
- ❖ A County Sustainability policy
- ❖ Creation of a Center for Healthy Living through partnerships with non-profit groups to create a community urban agriculture center and community recycling center.
- ❖ A partnership with Georgia Power to advance Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure

A "Green Team" has been formed from the Public Works Department and the Department of Planning and Sustainability. This team is nearing completion of DeKalb's Green Communities certification to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC). This year long effort is a comprehensive inventory to help identify our best opportunities to improve environmental performance and to achieve a higher environmental rating from ARC. In 2017, DeKalb's submission for Green Communities achieved the status of Silver level. With the teams hard work and dedication, the 2021 submission is targeting a Gold level certification.

The Green Team will continue to prioritize green initiatives and looks forward to beginning new and exciting projects all in service to the environment in the near future!



# DIRECTOR'S NOTES

At the risk of dating myself, I remember the first Earth Day celebration back in 1970 when I was still in high school. Without knowing a whole lot about this new celebration, I was happy to be a participant as it was a nice change to be able to get outdoors and enjoy a beautiful spring day! We joined a small parade, honking our horns and carrying signs about protecting the earth. Some of us just thought it was a good excuse to be late for class.

But in the years since that first Earth Day, I've had the fortune to witness the growth of environmental awareness and be a true partner in environmental improvement projects. As an engineer and public works director, I've been responsible for all sorts of projects aimed at improving our environment. These projects have included such things as new wastewater reclamation plant design and construction, wetland creation, resource conservation and recycling, or the introduction of many "green" technologies into the public works field.

The world has changed in the 51 years since that first Earth Day, and many strides in environmental awareness and improvements have been made. But the job is not over. We all can make a difference, even if it's something as simple as participating in the County's recycling programs. I urge everyone to use Earth Day 2021 as an opportunity to think about our actions and strive to become more conscious of the affects we make to the environment around us.



Rick Lemke, PE  
Public Works Director



## FLEET MANAGEMENT - Electric Vehicles

DeKalb County remains on the cutting edge of municipal practices that enhance the quality of life for its constituents. A clean and healthy environment for its residents to enjoy is of the utmost importance. This sentiment is reflected by Fleet Management's dedication to invest in electric vehicles. Electric vehicles are not only environmentally friendly, improving air quality and reducing oil consumption, they are fiscally sound investments, reducing maintenance and operational costs.

Electric vehicles made their first appearance in the mid-19th century. Their popularity and usage experienced a sharp decline after the arrival of the 20th century internal combustion engine vehicles. However, present day, electric vehicles are more popular than ever! While their popularity stems from their environmental and fiscal benefits, electric vehicles are some of the most attractive cars on the road.

DeKalb County Department of Fleet Management is taking steps to reduce its environmental footprint by slowly transitioning its fleet to be comprised mainly of CNG powered and electric vehicles. Currently, Fleet Management has approximately 27 electric vehicles including Chevrolet Bolts, Chevrolet Volts, Ford Fusions, Ford Focus' and Hybrid Bucket Trucks. Look for more electric vehicles showcasing Dekalb County's logo to hit the roads soon!



**DEKALB COUNTY  
STREAMS & DITCHES--  
WHO'S RESPONSIBLE?**

Property owners are responsible for the maintenance of ditches, creeks, and streams outside of the rights-of-way (ROW). The property owners also are responsible for mowing their yard within the road right-of-way.

The county is responsible for stormwater drainage structures that are in the ROW or on a final, recorded plat. This includes within 10 feet of a ditch, creek or stream that is at the end of a county-maintained structure.

**Citizen Drainage Program**

The Citizen Drainage Program assists homeowners in maintaining drainage conditions on their private property. This program consists of two elements to help homeowners control erosion their property: the Citizen Drainage Pipe and the Citizen Drainage Improvement Program. Both programs require an application and have certain restrictions.

**WHAT IS STORMWATER  
POLLUTION?**

Stormwater pollution is runoff that contains pollutants such as debris, chemicals, litter and other contaminants. This pollution is created as stormwater flows over impervious surfaces such as rooftops, parking lots and walkways.

Stormwater pollution flows into our stormwater drainage system which discharges into streams, creeks, lakes, and rivers—water bodies which are used for swimming, fishing and drinking water.

**HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?**

Residents can participate in the Storm Drain Marking program. This is a small effort which can greatly improve the water quality in DeKalb County! Contact DeKalb County for more information on the county's Storm Drain Marking program.



**HOW YOUR  
STORMWATER FEE IS  
DETERMINED?**

**What is a Stormwater  
Utility Fee?**

The Stormwater Utility (SWU) fee provides the most practical and appropriate means of funding stormwater services in DeKalb County. The SWU fee provides for an equitable assignment of costs because it is calculated in direct proportion to the type of property and the amount of impervious surface on the property.

**Who Pays?**

Every property owner in unincorporated DeKalb County whose property has an impervious surface is required to pay a SWU fee to help sustain the county's stormwater management program.

**How is the Fee Calculated?**

The SWU fee is based on an Equivalent Residential Unit, or ERU. One ERU is \$4 per month, or \$48 per year.

**Information on SWU Fees**

For more information on DeKalb County's stormwater management call the County's Roads & Drainage Division.



Roads & Drainage Division  
727 Camp Road  
Decatur, Georgia 30032  
(404)-297-3840  
dekalbcountyga.gov/roads

BE THE SOLUTION TO  
STORMWATER  
POLLUTION 2020 - 2022

## SANITATION DIVISION

# An Earth Day Message

Since Earth Day became a global movement in 1990, our collective mission for a cleaner environment has gained significant traction and continues with increasing urgency. Today, Earth Day is recognized annually by over a billion people seeking global change for a common cause - environmental stewardship. Environmental enthusiasts believe that focusing on emerging green technologies, innovative thinking and natural processes is one of the most viable ways to restore the world's ecosystems.

The global alliance surrounding Earth Day 2021 is remarkable. Branded Restore Our Earth, Earth Day 2021's parallel themes include climate literacy and environmental justice. According to the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA), annually, the U.S. spends approximately \$200 million processing recycling that ends up in landfills and other disposal facilities. Further, SWANA projects that over the next five years, the U.S. may waste approximately \$1 billion processing recycling that is really garbage. These are unfortunate statistics that can be mitigated through greater environmental stewardship efforts. Protecting the environment requires an all-encompassing approach - climate and environmental literacy; reforestation efforts; regenerative agriculture; climate restoration technologies; equity and environmental and justice; citizen science; community cleanups; and more.

This Earth Day, DeKalb renews its commitment to empower residents to connect around climate change action and ways to build more sustainable DeKalb communities. The Sanitation Division, too, is doing its part with honoring the County's commitment to environmental stewardship. Through a comprehensive and award-winning recycling program, the Division seeks to increase recycling participation (supported by recycling grant awards and public outreach initiatives). Approximately 60 percent of households within the Sanitation Division's service area participate in the residential single-stream recycling program, an impressive statistic that is above the national average. Since its inception in 2017, the Division's glass recycling program has collected over 3,500 tons of glass, another impressive statistic that has made DeKalb's glass recycling program the national gold standard (based on rankings from Strategic Materials Inc.). An electronics recycling program; a shoe & clothing recycling program; a school recycling program; and a commercial recycling program are also part of the County's recycling program.

The consistent mantra during every Earth Day celebration is - A healthy planet is not an option, it is a necessity. Thank you, DeKalb residents, for joining our cause toward a more sustainable DeKalb in 2021 and beyond.

-Pauline A. Andrea, Ph.D.  
Public Relations Manager, Sanitation  
Contributing Writer

