

INSPECTIONS DIVISION

This division is responsible for environmental inspection for the County and manages several environmental programs which include Stormwater, Illegal Dump Eradication, and Nuisance Properties. The Inspections Division ensures that environmental mandates required by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), and the Garland County Quorum Court are implemented throughout the county via the county's environmental programs and ordinances. The County has employees that are ADEQ licensed Illegal Dumps Control Officers that are also appointed as Environmental Officers for the County and as such are authorized to conduct inspections and initiate proper mitigation of environmental problems within the County. Contact information is available at the bottom of this section.

Illegal Dumps

The Illegal Dumps program was designed by the state to authorize counties to implement ordinances and empower personnel to help eradicate the illegal dumping of waste debris on properties within the county. Also addressed under this program is the problem of illegal burning of trash and debris. The Inspections Division works in conjunction with local and state agencies and departments to protect the public and the residents of the county from possible harm to life or property due to illegal activities involving trash disposal and burning.

Nuisance Property

The Nuisance Property program was designed to alleviate unsafe, unsightly, unsanitary properties within Garland County that pose a health, safety, hazardous, or environmental threat within the County. In addition, the County has passed an ordinance regulating the esthetics of area junk yards. Contact information is available at the bottom of this section.

Stormwater

The County is mandated under federal and state environmental law to establish a comprehensive program to regulate discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States. For Garland County the "Waters of the United States" includes all running water that flows into the creeks and rivers and lakes within the County. This regulation involves an emphasis on protecting the physical and biological integrity of the waterways to include "nonpoint source pollution" which comes from diffuse sources such as rainfall or snowmelt coming into contact with surfaces and material on the ground and then flowing off site into the creeks and rivers. This water is commonly referred to as "Stormwater." As water runs over the ground, paved streets, and parking lots, rooftops, and constructions sites, it picks up pollutants such as sediment, debris, and chemicals. Common pollutants include:

- Sediment: Sediment from construction sites is often viewed as the largest pollutant associated with stormwater runoff.
- Excess Nutrients: Phosphorus and nitrogen from landscaping practices, leaks in sewer systems and animal waste can contribute excessive amounts of nutrients that allow unwanted biological growth to occur.
- Oil and Grease: Vehicle traffic, leaks and spills, and manufacturing processes contribute toxic pollutants to stormwater.
- Heavy Metals: Copper, lead, zinc, arsenic, chromium, and cadmium from urban sources such as automobiles, paints, motor oil, and preservatives can reach toxic and poisonous levels if not contained properly.
- Bacteria: Leaking septic systems, garbage and pet waste can be a source of high levels of bacteria.
- Toxic Substances: Pesticides, herbicides, and hydrocarbons are often found in urban runoff.
- Organic Matter: The decomposition process of organic material results in depleted oxygen levels in waterways. Low levels of dissolved oxygen result in decreased aquatic life and even fish kills.
- Litter: Carelessly discarded trash such as cigarette butts, paper wrappers, and plastic bottles are not only an ugly blight, but contribute toxins and pollutants to the stormwater and can clog drains and culverts.
- Temperature: Stormwater runoff increases in temperature as it flows over impervious surfaces. Higher water temperatures impact a body of water's ability to support certain fish and aquatic life.

Stormwater containing one or more of the above contaminants seeps into the ground and/or drains into what we call "storm sewers." Storm sewers are the curbside openings one sees on street corners and at low points on the side of streets and roadways. **Many people do not understand that the water that enters the storm drain does not go to a water treatment facility.** Polluted stormwater runoff is transported and ultimately discharged into local rivers and streams without treatment.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency requires counties to regulate Small MS4's (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) that are permitted within the County under the State of Arkansas's General MS4 Permit. Due to Garland County's population density, we are one of 13 Arkansas counties that are required to develop and implement a Storm Water Management Program (SWMP). This program is designed to manage the quality of stormwater coming from construction sites before, during, and after construction. This program includes illicit discharge detection and elimination, and educational and enforcement components.