

6. Ensure adequate spill control equipment is provided and maintained in good working order.
7. Conduct periodic leak testing on underground storage tanks.
8. Notify Gwinnett County and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division of any spills immediately by phone at 678.376.7000 and 1.800.241.4113, respectively. Both numbers are staffed 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week.



Figure 3. Secondary Containment

### For more information

For more information regarding source water protection, please contact Gwinnett County's Stormwater Management Division at 678.376.6949.

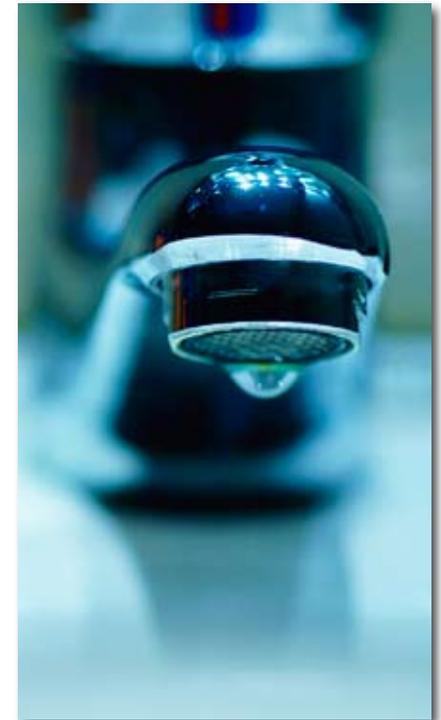
You may also obtain additional information online at [www.gwinnettstormwater.com](http://www.gwinnettstormwater.com). Click on *Water Quality Protection* and again on *Source Water Protection*.

Protecting our drinking water is everyone's responsibility. Thank you for your efforts in working with the County to protect public health by keeping our water supply free from contamination.

1. *Source Water Assessment Plan for Monroe Utilities Network, North Georgia RDC*  
 2. *Derailment Spills Risky Chemicals, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, 09.04.2000*

## it's our drinking water: protect it!

A Guide for Business and  
 Industry on Protecting  
 Our Water Sources



**Clean Water  
 Begins With You**

**gwinnett**county  
 department of water resources  
 stormwater management division  
 684 winder highway  
 lawrenceville, GA 30045

## You Are What You Drink

We all want to drink clean water. However, maintaining a high quality water supply cannot remain the sole responsibility of your water supplier.

Our drinking water comes from natural sources such as lakes, rivers, or groundwater. These sources, known as raw water, must remain relatively free of contamination so that the best quality water may be treated and then delivered to your door.

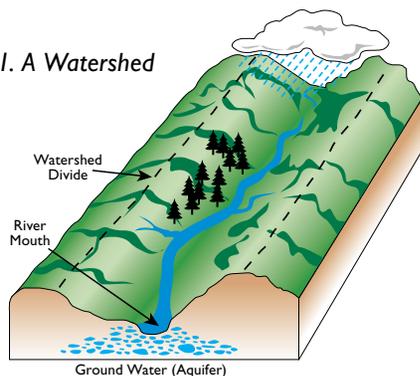
Gwinnett County and surrounding areas rely heavily on raw water from surface water sources such as lakes and rivers. As such, it is important to prevent contamination of the land, storm drains, and streams that feed these sources.



## Drinking from a Clean Glass

That area of land which drains rainwater and groundwater to a river is called a **watershed** (see figure 1). When a river is also used as a drinking

Figure 1. A Watershed



water source, that watershed is referred to as a **water supply watershed**. In simple terms, you can think of a water supply watershed as a very large glass that contains the water we intend to use for drinking.

Pollutants that leak from underground storage tanks or are spilled, distributed, or dumped onto the ground make their way into rivers and streams via surface and groundwater flows. Within a water supply watershed this can result in the contamination of the water source.

Cleaning up contamination or finding a new source of drinking water is complicated, costly, and sometimes impossible. Preventing contamination, therefore, has to be the priority.

There are several water supply watersheds in Gwinnett County (see figure 2). Protection efforts include the implementation of various legislative, planning, pollution prevention, and educational programs. Keeping water supply watersheds clean is just as important as making sure you drink from a clean glass.

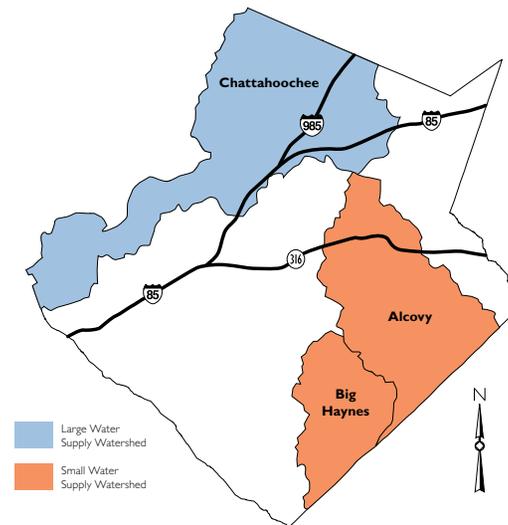


Figure 2. Water Supply Watersheds in Gwinnett County

## Case Study: Protecting Our Water Supplies

In September 2000, a major spill of ethylene glycol (antifreeze) and methanol from rail cars in Lawrenceville resulted in a discharge into the Alcovy River. Located in a water supply watershed, this river is used as a water supply by the city of Monroe, which is located about 20 miles downstream of the site of the spill. The spill caused the city to cease using the Alcovy River as their water supply and to access an alternate source for a period of time following the spill. Use of the alternate source continued until water quality monitoring revealed no further risk of contamination.<sup>1,2</sup>

This case study serves as a prominent local example of the significant impacts pollution may have on a drinking water source.

## What You Can Do To Protect Water Supplies

1. Use and dispose of harmful materials properly. Pollutants that are exposed to rainwater or that are dumped on or buried in the ground can contaminate water supplies.
2. Store all pollutants in a contained and covered area (see figure 3). See *Gwinnett County Publication WQ-03 Secondary Containment* at [www.gwinnettstormwater.com](http://www.gwinnettstormwater.com) under *Documents* for additional guidance.
3. Reduce paved areas! Use porous surfaces such as gravel that allow rain to soak into the ground rather than causing it to run off.
4. Don't overuse pesticides or fertilizers. Follow label directions. Many of these products contain hazardous chemicals that can travel through the soil and contaminate groundwater.
5. Audit your site to identify risks and establish a site-specific emergency plan that can be activated in the event of an incident that could threaten a water source. A basic self-audit questionnaire is available online at [www.gwinnettstormwater.com](http://www.gwinnettstormwater.com). Click on *Water Quality Protection* and again on *Source Water Protection*.