

DECEMBER 2009

## The Lafayette River and Storm Drains

By Karen Mayne



Have you ever thought about where rainwater goes once it flows down our neighborhood's streets and parking lots and into the storm drains? Those drains connect to underground pipes that empty into the closest stream and end up in the Lafayette River. These storm drains carry all the pollutants that wash off the streets . such as grease and oil from cars, and fertilizers and pesticides from yards. The rain also washes leaves, dirt, and litter into the storm drains. The EPA estimates that 50% of water pollution nationwide is from storm water. Why should this matter to us? We pay taxes through our HRSD bills to the City of Norfolk for storm water management to help clean up the Lafayette River and other waterways that drain into the Chesapeake Bay. Sediments, leaves, and trash can clog storm drains, leading to street flooding (and sometimes homes). The Lafayette River has gotten shallower over time, causing loss of habitat for fish and shellfish, and this is due to sediments that enter from storm drains or erode from the uplands. So, the more we can do to keep sediments and pollutants out of the streets and storm drains, the more we will help the Lafayette River and keep our storm water taxes in check.

Last month, our newsletter talked about a City program called EARNN (Environmental Awards for Recycling in Norfolk's Neighborhoods), through which civic leagues can earn money by taking actions to help keep their neighborhoods green.+ Our civic league has started several of these actions . and you can help reach our goal of earning \$750 for our civic league by May 31, 2010!



**Volunteers Caleb Smith (l) & Rob Kiernan (r) place a crab medallion on storm drain on Suburban Pkwy. Photo: KLM**

The Storm Drain Medallion program uses volunteers to put metal crab medallions on storm drains to remind citizens of what we can do to prevent pollution from entering our waterways, and to remind us that it is illegal to dump anything into storm drains. So far, volunteers have placed 40 of these medallions in the eastern area of our neighborhood. **We need volunteers to place medallions in the areas along and north of Virginian Drive and west of Galveston Boulevard.** Placing the medallions is quick and easy, and is a great way for kids or youth groups to do community service. We also have signs provided by the City that we put out the week of street cleaning each month, which will remind us to pull cars off the street so the street sweepers can remove as much debris as possible.



**If you are interested in helping put more medallions on the storm drains, or placing the street sweeping sign on your street each month, please get in touch with JoDee Cook at 587-7918. You will be helping keep our neighborhood green and clean, AND you will be helping us earn money for our civic league.**

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