Proper disposal of litter, wastes helps keep desert washes healthy

Clean stormwater means clean, healthy washes. When polluted stormwater enters storm drains, it empties directly into our precious washes. Keeping washes free of pollution takes action on our part, especially during the monsoon.

To coincide with its annual stormwater pollution prevention outreach campaign during the monsoon, Pima Association of Governments announces the release of the Clean Water Starts With Me Watershed Pocket Guide to help how we can make a difference.

The new pocket guide integrates watershed and natural heritage awareness with proactive ideas about how people can protect our vital natural resources. The pocket guide is available at the public library and will be distributed at various outreach events.

The pocket guide’s Tucson Regional Watershed Map conveys the significance of the water destinations within the Tucson area watershed. Visitors to these destinations can understand and appreciate the value in protecting our desert washes and other riparian areas and keeping them free of trash and other pollutants.

Did you know that one quart of motor oil can contaminate 250,000 gallons of stormwater? In fact, when accumulated in our monsoon runoff, small dispersed sources of pollutants are one of the leading causes of stormwater contamination.

Keeping pollutants out of washes is particularly important for the health of our wildlife, which relies on the washes as pathways for moving through our metro area.

Residents of the desert can protect washes through various pollution prevention

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efforts, such as properly disposing of chemicals, cleaning up litter and reporting illegal dumping.

Leftover household products that contain corrosive, toxic, ignitable or reactive ingredients are considered to be household hazardous waste. Proper disposal of these wastes through the Tucson/Pima County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Program allows the materials to be recycled instead of creating a toxic impact.

Another common source of pollution is litter. Many of the local towns and cities have wash clean-up programs to help, such as Tucson Clean and Beautiful. This is a great way that community groups can keep both neighborhoods and stormwater clean.

Tucson Clean and Beautiful has provided a short list of washes that have portions in need of adoption. These are not necessarily the "worst" around town in terms of needing cleanup, but are a great adoptable size, are distributed throughout the region, are accessible and are well known enough that if a business adopts them they might gather some name recognition: Alamo Wash, Arcadia Wash, Airport Wash, Camino Seco Wash, Cholla Wash and Stone Avenue Wash. Several regional roadways around town also have sections available: Nogales Highway, Mission Road, Grant Road, Oracle Road, Kolb Road and Valencia Road.

Annually, Pima Association of Governments works in collaboration with local stormwater managers to spread the Clean Water Starts With Me message across the region. Don't forget to also help by scooping dog poop, fixing leaky vehicles, and harvesting rainwater. Your participation does make a difference.

For more information, visit us on Facebook or at www.PAGstorm.com

Pima Association of Governments is an association of local, state and tribal governments with a mission to build consensus among its members and the public on regional planning for transportation, energy, watershed and air quality. PAG's staff gather and analyze data, provide accurate information, and coordinate an open and cooperative planning process to promote good decision-making for the region. Please visit www.PAGregion.com for more information or www.facebook.com/PAGregion

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