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CITY OF TYBEE ISLAND

PRESS RELEASE:
For Immediate Release

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HOLISTIC APPROACH TO STORMWATER ON TYBEE ISLAND

Tybee Island, Ga. – (April 29, 2008) Managing storm water on a barrier island presents special challenges relating to quantity and quality of runoff. Once the issues have been identified, a logical and systematic approach can be applied to address both capacity and quality issues.

Over the past year and a half, Tybee's Department of Public Works has been inventorying, inspecting and mapping the current storm drain system on Tybee to address the current and future needs more effectively. Working with the Army Corps of Engineers, the department has established a Geographical Information System (GIS) map of storm drains and worked on field verification of current infrastructure. According to DPW's manager, Joe Wilson, "This information helps in determining condition and capacity, as well as in point source pollution detection."

Siltation from construction sites, runoff from unvegetated lands, and dirt from vehicle tires as well as parking lots contribute to pollution at the outfalls. Eliminating the "fines" (small dirt particles to which heavy metals adhere) greatly influences the quality of storm water. Because there are a multitude of sources affecting the quality of the runoff, a multifaceted approach is used to address these issues through established Best Management Practices (BMPs).

There have been a number of these BMPs enacted on Tybee Island:

- ◆ Sweeping roads with a vacuum sweeper on a consistent basis – DPW sweeps Highway 80, parking lots, and other major arteries three times a week, resulting in 30 tons of debris per week.
- ◆ Cleaning catch basins – Implementing twice a year cleaning of all catch basins has resulted in better flow and less debris at outfalls.
- ◆ Putting paved inverts in all catch basins – These inverts allow each basin to be self cleaning, resulting in better flow.
- ◆ Installing catch basin filtration systems in parking lots which catch the 'fines' and floatables, resulting in less pollution at outfalls. Six of these filter systems have been placed in the 16th Street Parking Lot, and two more in the 14th Street lot, as part of Tybee's recent downtown business district renovation project.
- ◆ Encouraging grass swales while maintaining open ditches which provide storm water filtration and slow down velocity, allowing silts to settle out.
- ◆ Upsizing and retrofitting all outfalls to allow more retention and to reduce tidal intrusion.

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- ◆ Establishing oyster beds at outfalls, a biological BMP established with the UGA Research Station at Skidaway Institute, using the oyster recycling center at DPW.
- ◆ Establishing a ground water table survey in cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers to help determine capacity levels in retention basins.

According to Joe Wilson, "Utilizing all of these BMPs will allow us to address our quantity and quality issues with which we are currently faced. Future policy enhancements may be needed as the demand on our current infrastructure increases."

Other BMPs could also help significantly in reducing storm water runoff. These could include retention basins that double as sources for irrigation, pervious pavements, rain barrels, green roofs, and other similar efforts.

Regarding water quality efforts by DPW, Tybee's Mayor Jason Buelterman said, "The City of Tybee and its citizens place a very high value on our beautiful coastal environment. By finding creative and innovative ways of managing our storm water runoff, the City is helping to ensure that we are doing whatever we can to protect and preserve our coastal ecosystem." The City is confident that Tybee can address future capacity needs if the Island's quality requirements are met with a considered, "holistic" approach.

Tybee Island is one of Georgia's barrier islands, protecting the marshlands and inland areas from some of the severe weather that the Atlantic serves to the coast. For more information about the City of Tybee Island, visit us online at <http://www.cityoftybee.org>.

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Attachment: Picture with caption, "Tybee Island DPW's Joe Wilson examines one of the new catch basin filtration systems in the newly completed construction in the Strand parking lot near 18th Street. These new filters are helping to reduce pollution at storm water outfalls on the island."



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