



# connections

## FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Linking Greenville's Neighborhoods to Jobs and Open Space

City of Greenville, South Carolina

January 2014, Issue No. 22



## What's in Our Water?

Sustainable Cinema

Tuesday, January 21

6:00 to 7:30 pm

Kroc Center

Join us for an evening of short videos related to water quality issues and how individuals, businesses, and municipalities like ours are tackling these very important problems. Refreshments will be provided.

Residents of the City of Greenville are invited to join us for this month's Sustainable Cinema for a chance to win a free rain barrel!

[Click here to add this event to your calendar.](#)

## Sustainability Spotlight

*Nutrients in the water:  
The good, the bad, and  
what we can do about it.*

by  
Jaclin DuRant

Nutrients are good things. By very definition, a nutrient is a naturally occurring element or compound that is essential for an organism's healthy growth and development. Yet, just like chocolate cake, too much of a good thing can be very bad, and too many nutrients cause major problems. Nutrients are a major pollutant in US water bodies. In fact, more than half of impaired US surface water bodies are impaired due to eutrophication, a process caused by excess nutrients, especially Nitrogen and Phosphorous.

Eutrophication occurs when excess Nitrogen and Phosphorous are washed into water bodies. These nutrients normally limit the growth of aquatic plant life, so when they are available in excess, algae and aquatic weeds grow quickly. The resulting algal blooms and excess plants die, and bacteria break them down. Since nutrients lead to an explosion of plant growth, the resulting explosion of bacteria uses up the



South Carolina watersheds

## Greenville's Urban Watershed

### Sustainable Conversation

Tuesday, January 30

12:00 to 1:30 pm

Kroc Center

Panel presentations related to Greenville's water, some of the issues that we currently face, and up to date information on ways that water quality is being addressed in our City. The panel will feature presentations by Dr. Dave Hargett Executive Director for [Lake Conestee](#) Nature Park, Lisa Wells from the City of Greenville's environmental engineering division, and Ashley Rhinehart, Public Relations Coordinator for [ReWa](#). Short presentations from the panel will be followed by time for questions and discussion. Lunch will be provided.

Installing a rain barrel is a great way to conserve water, reduce stormwater runoff, and protect water quality. Check out this [video](#) created by the City's environmental engineering division to learn how to install a rain barrel at your home or business, and join us for this month's Sustainable Conversations panel on Greenville's Watershed for a chance to win a free rain barrel! (Must be a City of Greenville resident to win.)

[Click here to add this event to your calendar.](#)

dissolved Oxygen in the water, leading to Oxygen shortages. Oxygen shortages in turn can cause fish kills, loss of habitat for aquatic organisms, the degradation of sea grass beds and coral reefs, and loss of biodiversity. Also, nutrient pollution can lead to blooms of toxic algae and cyanobacteria which can be harmful to animals and people. If unchecked, these problems may lead to the collapse of fishing and shellfish industries, extinction of aquatic animals, loss of water for recreational purposes, lack of clean water for irrigation, manufacturing, and drinking, higher cost of water processing, and more.

The answer to this problem seems simple. If excess nutrients are causing such problems in our water bodies, then we should stop them from entering the water in the first place. This approach, regulating and controlling the input of pollutants into water bodies, has been very successful in the US to reduce water pollution from industry. But, nutrients enter the water mostly as nonpoint source pollution, meaning that they come from many diffuse sources, making it very difficult to regulate their input. Nutrients come from agricultural operations as runoff from over fertilized fields or animal waste; from atmospheric sources due to the burning of fossil fuels and in acid rain; from cities in the form of stormwater runoff carrying pet waste, fertilizers, soaps, and more into rivers and streams; from construction sites, logging operations, and old mines as part of sediment erosion and organic debris.

Nutrient pollution is a serious problem in the US, and as we

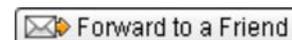
continue to develop and grow, it is extremely important that we take as many steps as we can to reduce nutrient inputs into our water bodies. Since it is so difficult to control and regulate nonpoint source pollution, it is up to each of us to be aware and control our nutrient pollution. If every pet owner picked up and buried their pet waste away from water and every home owner and farmer reduced the amount of fertilizer they used; if every time you wash your car you make sure it's over grass or in a car wash; if every business and home installed rain barrels or cisterns to collect rain water and reduce storm water runoff; if every construction utilized properly installed silt fences and left planted buffer areas around streams to capture and absorb stormwater; we wouldn't solve the problem, but we could make a big step in the right direction.

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City of Greenville | 206 S. Main Street | Greenville | SC | 29601

