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MSD celebrates World Water Day every day by monitoring and testing our local waterways

LOUISVILLE, KY – March 22 is World Water Day, but every day is “World Water Day” at MSD. Making sure our waterways are safe and clean is a top priority. So how do we know the condition of our waterways? Testing and monitoring occur weekly during the recreational season and quarterly during the colder months.

“MSD’s focus on safe, clean waterways is central to how we operate as three utilities in one providing wastewater treatment, stormwater management and flood protection services to our community. Testing our waterways provides valuable information and is essential to our environmental management program,” states MSD Executive Director Tony Parrott.

MSD employees sample area streams, testing for:

- **Ecoli** (bacteria found in the intestines of warm-blooded organisms)
- **Dissolved oxygen** (fish and other aquatic life need high amounts)
- **pH** (a measure of the acidic basic in the water, ranging from 0 to 14, with 7 being neutral)
- **Specific Conductance** (testing level of salt, which gives water the ability to conduct electricity, high levels are harmful to life in the waterway)
- **Temperature** (summer heat can reduce available dissolved oxygen in the water)

Additionally, MSD retrieves data from United States Geological Survey monitors that record stream measurements every 15 minutes. That data is available by searching waterdata.usgs.gov.

MSD guards approximately 892 miles of streams and the Ohio River shoreline in Jefferson County. Urban runoff from streets, parking lots, and roofs is often the largest source of pollution for streams and other urban water bodies. When rain falls on these impervious surfaces, the water does not soak into the ground. Instead, the water runs off these surfaces and into drainage ditches and pipes, eventually entering our streams.

The good news is that anyone can help with urban runoff! It is pretty simple. You can help by:

- Picking up litter.
- Limiting the use of lawn care chemicals. Over-fertilizing can cause excessive nitrogen in our streams and lead to algae blooms.

- Picking up after your pet. Dogs in Jefferson County produce four dump truckloads of poo every day! Bag it and trash it!
- Composting your grass clippings.
- Planting a tree or a rain garden to help capture and filter excess rainwater.
- Washing your car in the yard, letting the water soak into the grass.

Background

MSD's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program was created to help maintain and improve the quality of our waterways by reducing the pollutant discharges that flow into them. The program is regulated under a permit issued by the Kentucky Division of Water (DOW) to MSD and the cities of Anchorage, Jeffersontown, Prospect, Shively, St. Matthews, and Louisville Metro, with MSD as the lead administrative agency.

MSD implements the permit activities through a Storm Water Quality Management Plan that guides compliance with the MS4 permit.

The MS4 Permit program activities include:

- Public Education, Outreach, Participation and Learning Experiences
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Industrial Program
- Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control
- *Long-Term (Post-Construction) Stormwater Runoff Control*
- *Good Housekeeping/Pollution Prevention Program*
- Monitoring
- Performance Assessment and Reporting

For more information, visit LouisvilleMSD.org/WaterQuality

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About MSD



The Louisville/Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) works to achieve and maintain clean, environmentally safe waterways for a healthy and vibrant community. The organization's more than 670 employees provide wastewater management, drainage and flood protection services across the 376 square miles of Louisville Metro, and wastewater service in portions of Bullitt and Oldham counties. In addition to operating and maintaining Louisville Metro's sewer system, floodwall system, water quality treatment centers and flood pumping stations, MSD invests in hundreds of infrastructure improvement projects each year, plants more than 1,000 trees and other vegetation annually to enhance water filtration and reduce runoff, and provides numerous outreach programs to inform and educate the community about protecting our waterways.