

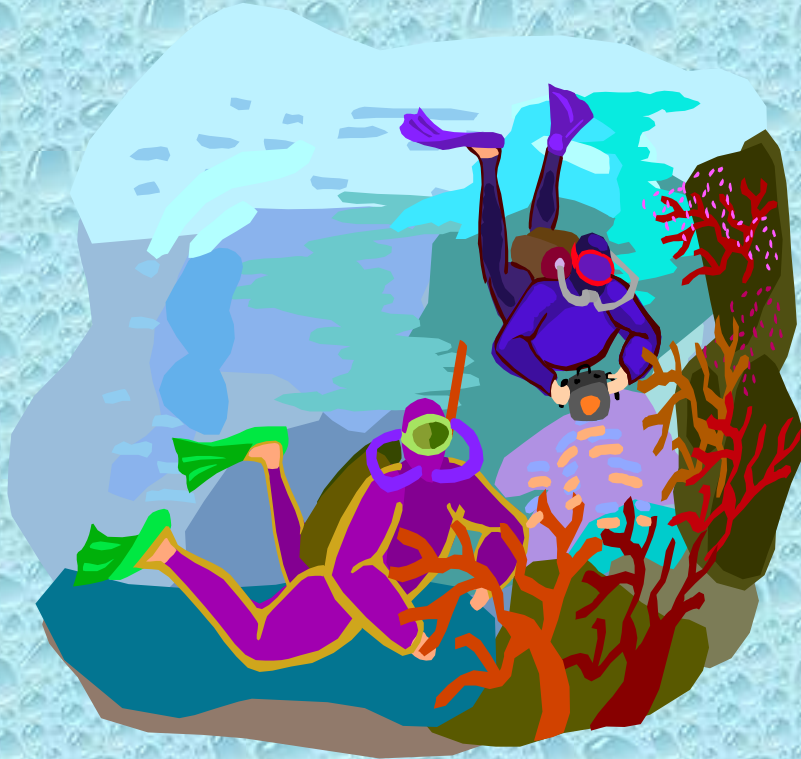
February 2009 is Water Quality Awareness Month in the Florida Keys



Remember, Clean Water
Supports the Keys
Good LIFE.

You **CAN** make a
difference.

Who is participating in Water Quality Awareness Month?



- Monroe County
- Key Colony Beach
- City of Key West
- City of Marathon
- City of Layton
- Village of Islamorada
- Key Largo Wastewater Treatment District



Why is Good Water Quality Important?

- Good water quality is essential for the health of the coral reef, seagrass beds, mangroves, hardwood hammocks and other habitats that make up the Keys ecosystem.
- The fishing and diving based economy of the Florida Keys depends upon a healthy ecosystem.





What Can I do in my community?

- You can support community efforts to upgrade or replace illegal cesspools and failing septic systems. Improperly treated wastewater is a health threat that sometimes causes beach closures in the Keys.
- Untreated or poorly treated wastewater also adds nutrients that can be harmful to coral reef and seagrass habitats.





As a boat owner,
what should I do?

- Use caution when fueling your boat.
- If you overfill, wipe the spillage up with rags and give the soiled rags to the marina operator.
- Never hose the fuel down because this will pollute nearshore waters.

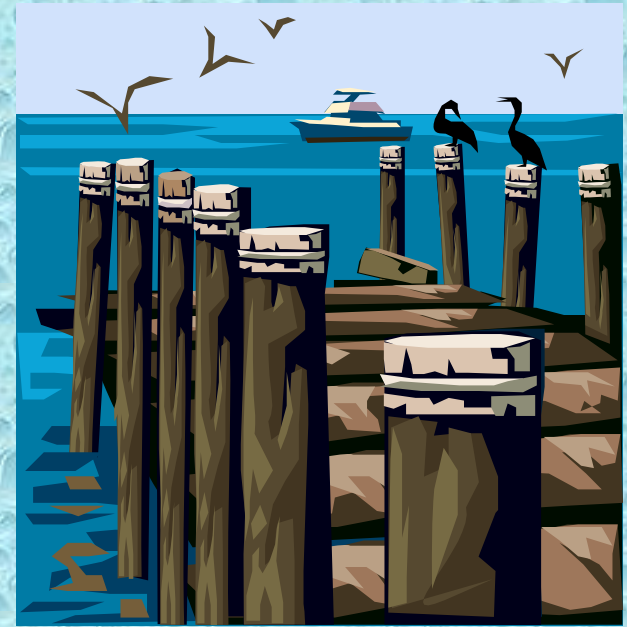
As a boat owner, what should I do?



- Always keep your engine well-tuned and check for hose leaks on a regular basis.
- Dispose of old gasoline, used oil, old flares, used batteries, paint stripper and bilge pump switches containing mercury at proper hazardous waste facilities.



What about sewage in my boat's holding tank?



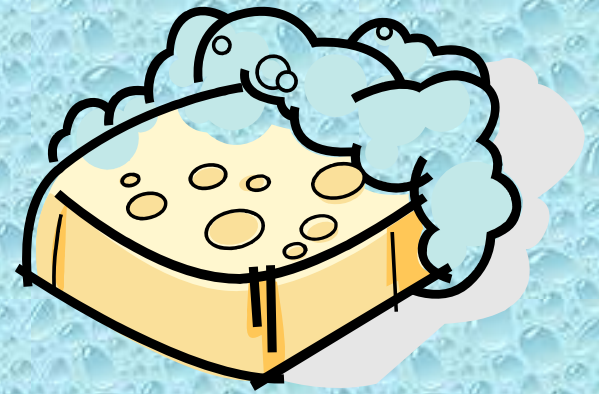
- Use marinas with pumpout facilities or use a pumpout boat. State waters in the Keys are a “No-Discharge” zone. Discharging waste from boats degrades Keys surface waters, helps spread disease and is *illegal anywhere in the Keys*.

What about sewage in my boat's holding tank?



- Never discharge sewage into the water. Boat sewage is more concentrated than raw municipal sewage and chemical additives in vessel holding tanks can be poisonous to marine life.
- When visiting marinas, utilize their shoreside facilities.

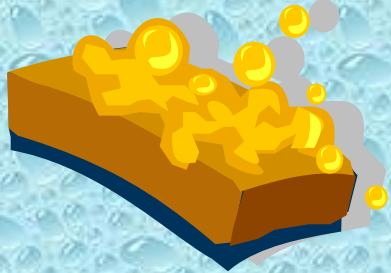
What about washing my boat?



- Clean your boat where cleaners and other materials can be contained and disposed of properly. Many products used to wash boat hulls contain chlorine, phosphates, and ammonia. Chlorine is poisonous to marine life and phosphates and ammonia are fertilizers that can cause algae blooms.



What about washing my boat?



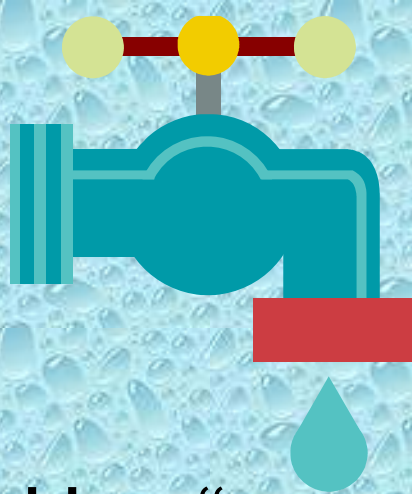
- Reduce the need for in-the-water cleaning by using dry slips.
- Visit www.cleanboating.org to find out more steps you can take to keep our waters clean.



What about cleaning my catch?

- When cleaning your catch, don't throw fish carcasses into canals or boat basins where they can add excess nutrients into the water. Instead, wrap the fish in newspaper and throw it away. Excess nutrients use up oxygen that is needed by living fish and may cause undesirable algae blooms.





What can I do around the house?

- Use “green” household products, including phosphate-free soaps and detergents.
- Dispose of hazardous wastes according to label instructions.
- Conserve water...and follow water restrictions.



What should I plant in my yard?

- Use native plants when landscaping your lawn. Many non-native plants depend upon fertilizers, pesticides and watering all winter long during the dry season.



What should I plant in my yard?



- Use native plants to create a berm or barrier that reduces runoff into nearshore waters and canals. Rain storms and overwatering can wash those chemicals into the ocean, harming nearshore waters.

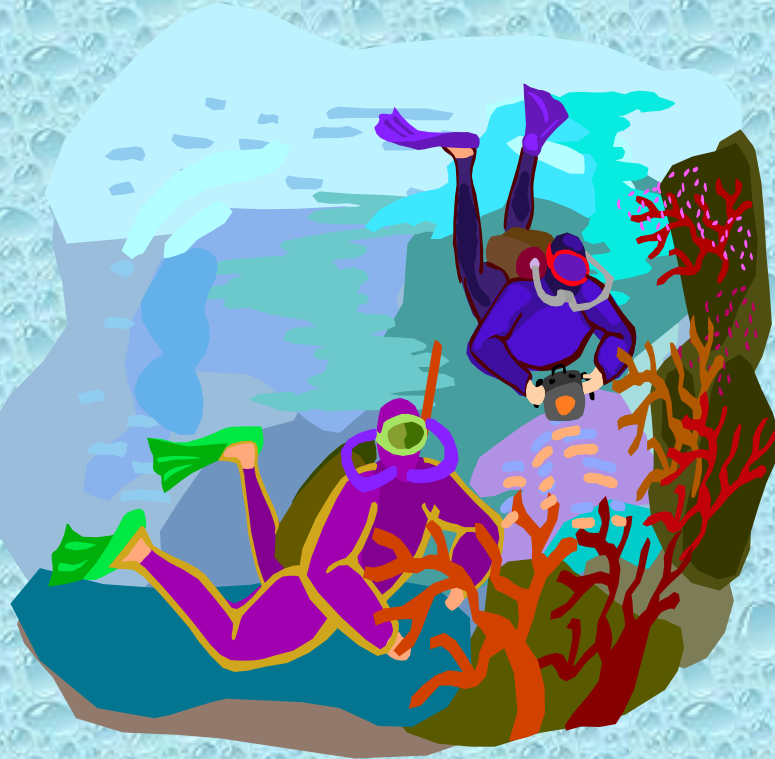


What If I use fertilizer on my yard plants?

- If you do fertilize your yard, use limited amounts of slow-release products and avoid fertilizing during rainy periods when runoff is high.
- Nutrient runoff from fertilizers can cause undesirable algae blooms that cloud the water and use up oxygen needed by fish.



What else can I do to keep our Keys waters clean?



- *Recycle, Reduce and Reuse.*
- Make your household and business “**green**”.
- Support the *Clean Marina* and *Clean Boatyard* programs—
www.cleanmarina.org or
www.cleanboatyard.org.

Clean Water is Everyone's Business



Brought to you by the Water Quality Protection Program
for the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary