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## On Earth Day Eve, Georgia DOT Lauds Pollution Prevention Successes

ATLANTA – Tomorrow, April 22, will be the 44<sup>th</sup> Earth Day. What began humbly in 1970 as a “national environmental teach-in,” has grown into a worldwide movement to conserve natural resources and protect the environment. In keeping with the precepts of Earth Day, the Georgia Department of Transportation has completed a report on some of the environmental accomplishments of its Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program.

As a component of federal and state efforts to better manage stormwater runoff in urban areas, Georgia DOT was given a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit in 2012 to prevent excessive discharges, dumping, spills, erosion and pollutants from contaminating nearby waterways in designated Georgia communities. The Department’s MS4 permit activities are an integral part of Georgia DOT’s commitment to be a good environmental steward. Among the MS4 accomplishments thus far:

- More than 2,380 bags of trash were collected and removed from state roads by more than 2,100 volunteers from 92 separate organizations under the auspices of Georgia DOT’s Adopt-A-Highway program.
- Thirty-two Pet Waste Stations were installed in Welcome Centers and Rest Areas throughout the state. These stations provide bags for waste collection in designated pet walk areas where trash receptacles are plentiful and easily accessible (*photo attached*). Pet waste has been found to contain high concentrations of bacteria, parasites, and viruses. When it enters our recreational waters, it can cause sore throats, intestinal problems, rashes, nausea, eye and ear infections. As pet waste decomposes, it demands a high level of oxygen from water, which can kill fish and plant life by reducing available oxygen levels.
- The Department trained 538 employees and 307 contractors on stormwater pollution prevention best practices. Twelve separate courses were taught at 54 training sessions and more courses are being developed for future opportunities.
- Information has been made available at Welcome Centers and on the Stormwater Pollution Prevention page of the Department website ([www.dot.ga.gov](http://www.dot.ga.gov)) to inform the public about stormwater pollution; the Department’s effort to prevent it; and what citizens themselves can do to help, including reporting suspicious discharges.
- Georgia DOT staff routinely inspects Department projects to make certain construction is not causing pollutants to enter nearby running waters. We also install roadway drainage systems that allow water to absorb into the soil and landscaping areas to filter runoff.
- Finally, the staff inspects all potential stormwater discharge points on Department property or projects to detect and trace any pollutants that may enter the system, for example: detergents and wash water, oil and paint, or sewage from sewer pipes.

*There’s more to the Georgia Department of Transportation than roads and bridges – much more. In fact, Georgia DOT is one of the state’s largest, most active environmental protection agencies. Each day, Department specialists work to insure its projects do not harm our drinking water, cultural resources, streams, endangered species,*

wetlands, historic sites, rivers, air quality, harbors, threatened species, floodplains, special architecture, fish populations, wildlife habitats, noise levels, important archaeological features, disadvantaged communities, native peoples, farmlands, migratory birds and more. For more information on Georgia DOT, please visit [www.dot.ga.gov](http://www.dot.ga.gov) or subscribe to our Press Release [RSS feed](#). You may follow us on [Facebook](#) ([www.facebook.com/GeorgiaDOT](http://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaDOT)) and [Twitter](http://twitter.com/gadepoftrans) (<http://twitter.com/gadepoftrans>).

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