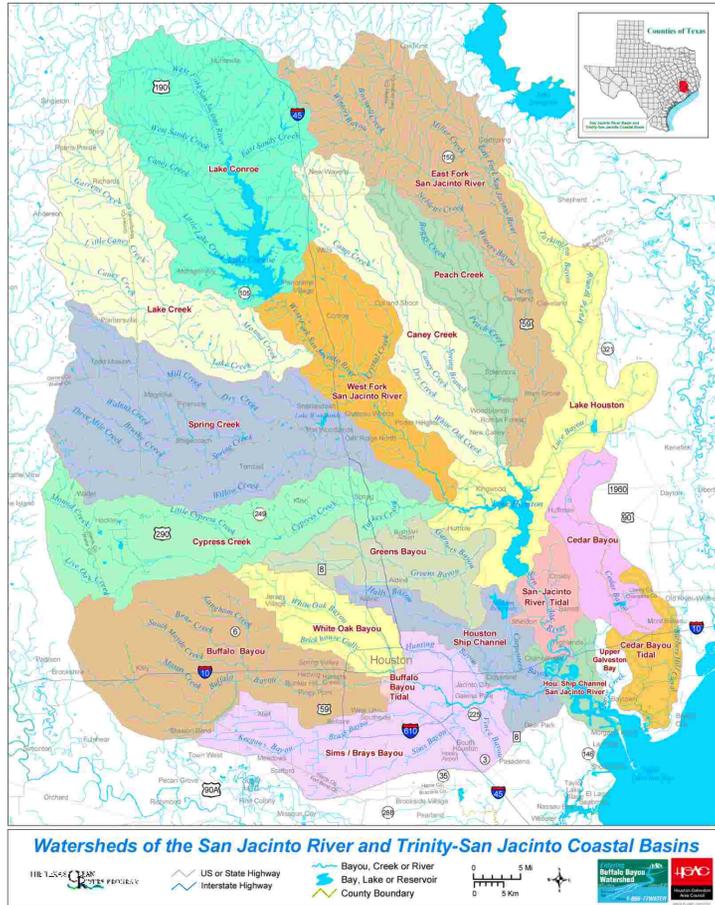


# What Watershed Do You Live In?



## Why Should You Care?

A watershed is simply the area of land that catches rain and drains to a common outlet: a marsh, stream, river, lake, bayou, bay or groundwater reservoir.

No matter where you live...you live in a watershed! Whether you live in the city, in the country, or in a swamp - you are part of a watershed. Because water drains from wherever you are to a river, a bayou, a lake or a bay, and because what you do where you live has a direct impact on your watershed, that's why you should care and why you should know what a watershed is!

[www.trashbash.org](http://www.trashbash.org)

**hotline: 281-486-9500**

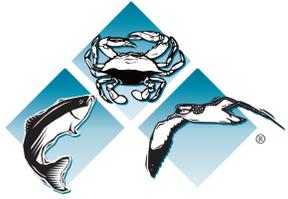
Maps Courtesy of:



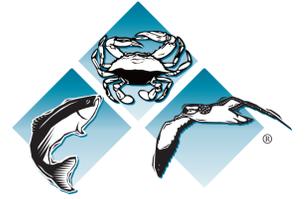
Information and Photos  
Courtesy of:



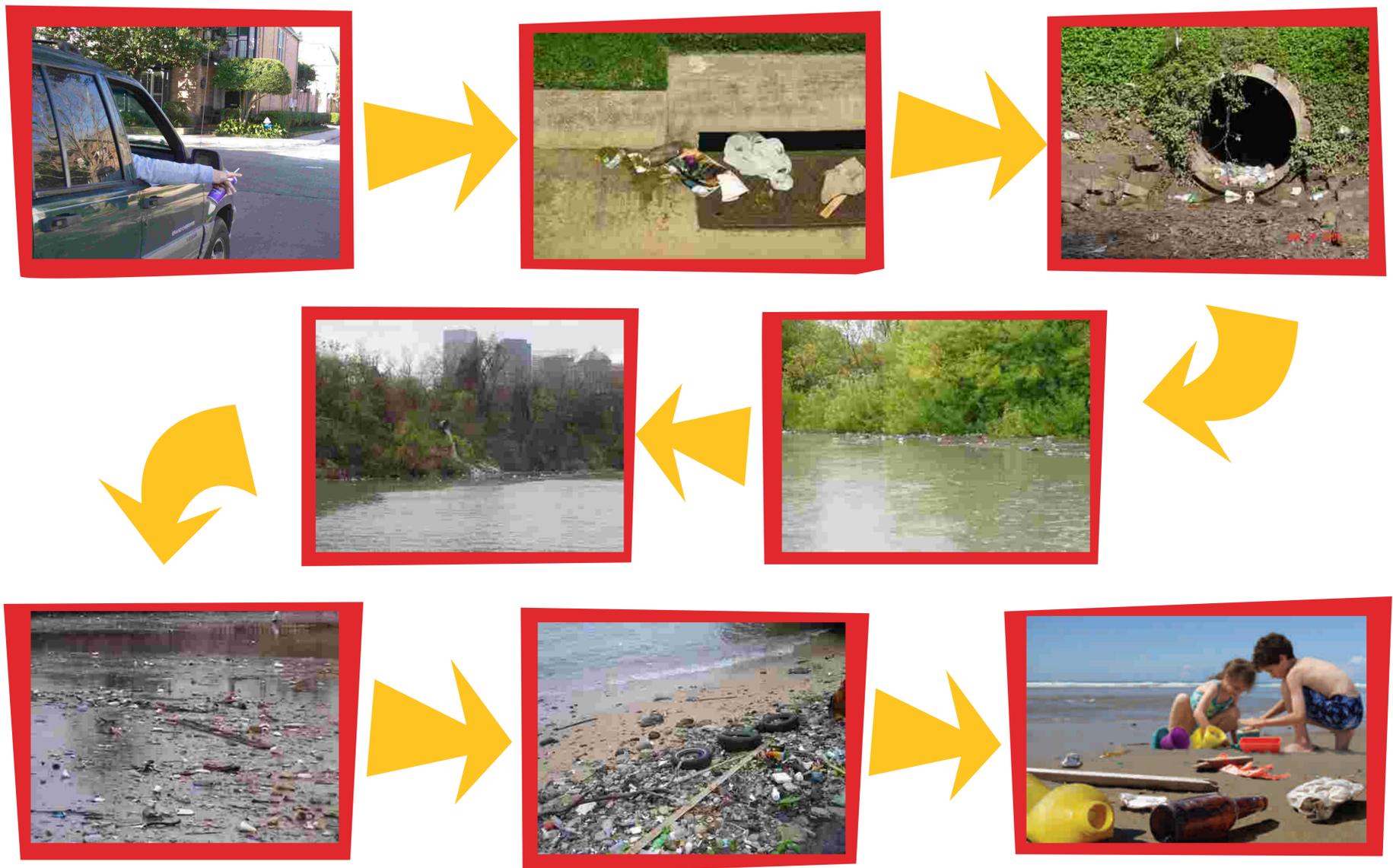
# River, Lakes, Bays `N Bayous



# Trash Bash



## Garbage In, Garbage Out: The Journey of Trash

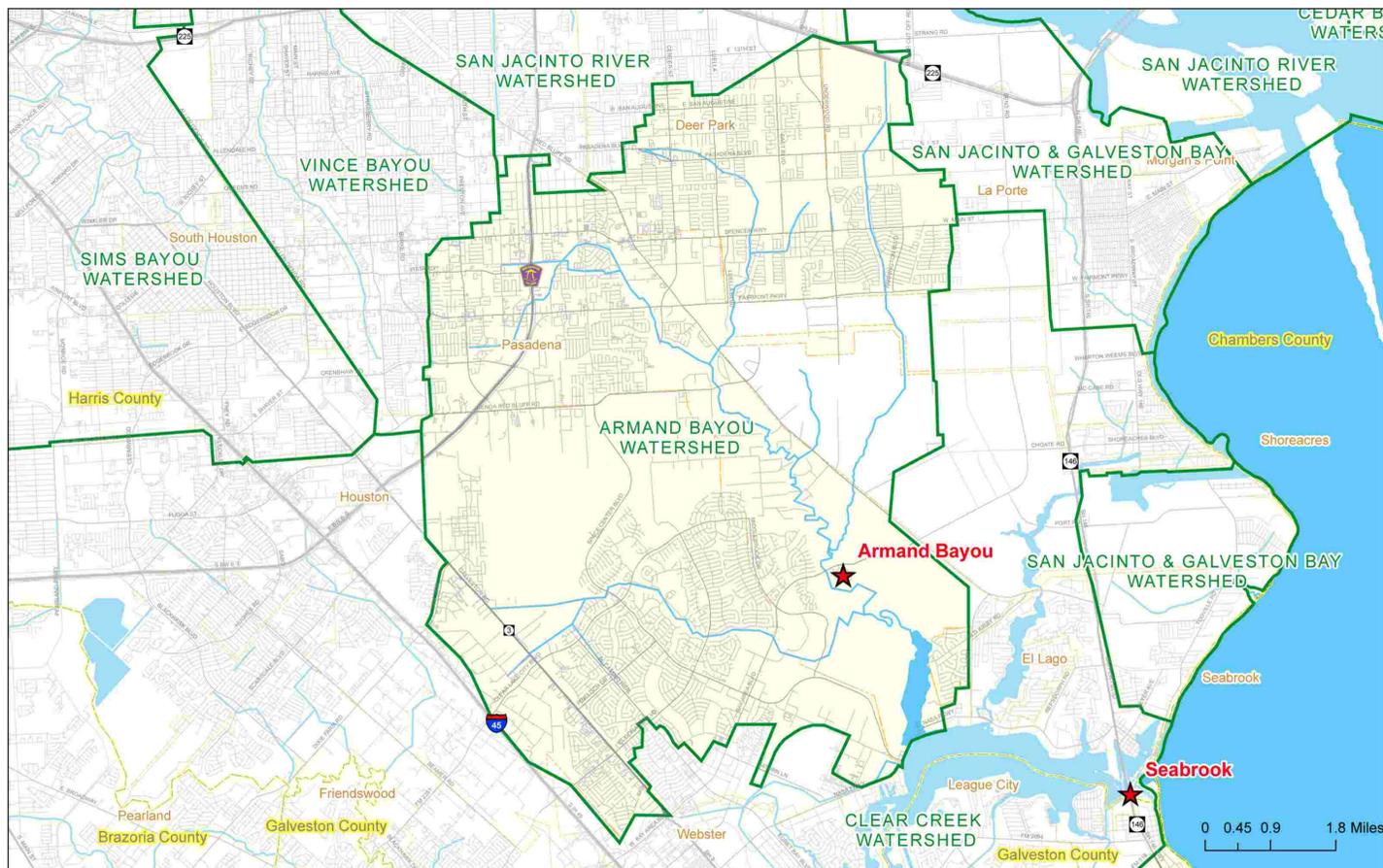


## Where does all that trash come from?

Street litter, such as plastic bags, cups, and candy wrappers, gets swept away with rain water into storm drains and ends up floating into our rivers, lakes and bayous, eventually finding its way to the ocean and our beaches.

A great deal of street litter is made up of plastic, which takes hundreds of years to break down (biodegrade) and become harmless to the environment. Wildlife often mistake litter for food and can become tangled up in it. Plastics and metals can leach harmful chemicals into the environment and into our drinking water supplies. These materials can also contribute to the transmission of disease. In addition, trash simply degrades the beauty of our cities and neighborhoods.

Marine Debris Biodegradation Time Line	
Items thrown or washed into the waterway	Time
Paper Towel	2-4 weeks
Newspaper	6 weeks
Apple Core	2 months
Cardboard box	2 months
Cotton gloves	1-5 months
Waxed Cardboard Milk Carton	3 months
Cotton Rope	3-14 months
Cardboard Beverage Holder	6 months
Cotton Diaper	1 year
Wool Gloves	1 year
Plywood	1-3 years
A Painted Wooden Stick	13 years
Tin Can	50 years
Styrofoam Cup	50 years
Styrofoam Buoy	80 years
Aluminum Can	200 years
Plastic 6-Pack Ring Beverage Holders	400 years
Disposable Diapers	450 years
Plastic Bottle	450 years
Monofilament Fishing Line	600 years
Glass Bottles and Jars	undetermined amount of time



# What You Can Do!

## Don't Pollute.

- Recycle as much of your trash as possible, and put all other litter in garbage cans.
- Don't sweep grass clippings, leaves or yard waste into the street or storm drain.
- Repair car leaks and dispose of used auto fluids and batteries at designated drop-off collection and recycling centers.
- Use Watersmart landscaping methods ([www.watersmart.cc](http://www.watersmart.cc)).
- When walking your pet, pick up after them and put the waste in a bag that you can put in your garbage at home.
- Use reusable, canvas bags for your grocery shopping trips. Plastic bags are one of the number one litter pollutants in our bayous.
- Purchase household and garden products that are "less toxic" to the environment.
- Wash your car on your lawn or gravel. Grass and gravel filter the dirt and soap out of the water and keep dirty runoff out of our storm drains, which empty directly into streams, lakes and bayous. Don't worry, the soap won't hurt your lawn!
- Most Importantly - NEVER throw anything in the storm drain. If you see trash on the ground, pick it up and toss it in the nearest trash can.

## Know Your Watershed Address.

- You know your street address, right? Your "earth address" is your watershed. Know what it is! It's just as important, if not more important, than your street address.
- The Environmental Protection Agency maintains a "Surf Your Watershed" web site. (<http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm>). You can input your zipcode or the name of your city or town to find out what watershed you live in.
- Look at any map of your area. What are the names of the closest streams to your house? Chances are, you live in the watershed of those streams. The National Map (<http://nationalmap.usgs.gov/>) will show most of the water bodies in your area.

## Get Involved.

- Volunteer with your local Trash Bash each spring ([www.trashbash.org](http://www.trashbash.org)).
- Help educate your neighbors. Get a group together to mark storm drains in your neighborhood with the SWIM (Storm Water Inlet Marker) Clean Water Clear Choice "No Dumping, Flows to Galveston Bay" message ([www.cleanwaterclearchoice.com](http://www.cleanwaterclearchoice.com)).
- Join or form a watershed association. Many citizen groups are forming around the country to help restore or clean up their watershed. Contact your local county agent or check with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality about watershed groups that might exist in your area.

*Remember, Caring for our watersheds is everyone's responsibility.*

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