

## Storm Drains Labeled: Volunteers' Efforts Keep Our Water Clean by Melissa Baird

Perhaps you have noticed signs marking the storm drain inlets around your home, school, or business. City of Plano Sustainability Volunteers label the drains to remind citizens that each one washes into a water source, and that it is illegal to dump litter, yard trimmings, or chemicals into the drains.

"I'm really interested in water conservation," says Karen Mitchell, a Plano volunteer since 2007. "I believe in keeping our water quality up, and labeling storm drains is a good way to educate people. Usually, people ask me what I'm doing when I'm out placing the labels. Plus, it's a good excuse to get outside and ride my bike!" Karen is on the board of directors for her homeowner's association, where she is head of the landscape committee.

The storm drain volunteers provide a valuable service to the public. Water quality and water conservation are pertinent health issues for North Texas. With the rising cost of energy and dwindling clean water supplies, water cleaning technologies will become more and more costly if pollution is not addressed. Storm drain labeling is a visual reminder to residents to protect their water and their health.

Tanis Roelofs, a recently retired teacher with 40 years of education experience, is a newly minted storm drain volunteer. "I walk the dog every morning and I see trash going into the drains. I also see people blowing grass clippings into them. I think the labels are an important tool we can use to help keep our water sources clean."

If you are interested in volunteering for this or other projects, please contact Deb Bliss, City of Plano Sustainability Volunteer Coordinator.