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Simple things that everyone can do to improve water quality. That is the concept behind the Clean Water Guardians program. The majority of water pollution that occurs today results from polluted stormwater runoff, which can carry pathogens, fertilizers, pesticides, pathogens, and all sorts of pollutants from yards, gardens, parking lots, and rooftops, straight to local creeks and rivers.

The Clean Water Guardians program recognizes homeowners, forestry, agriculture, schools, small businesses and construction sites that take appropriate measures to reduce polluted runoff from their property.

Four categories of small business are covered: landscaping/turf, automotive maintenance, food service, and building maintenance. Businesses in these categories receive a self-assessment checklist and informational materials. If the business meets the criteria for approval, they may display the Clean Water Guardian logo at their business and in advertising.

As a homeowner, there are many simple things that you can do to prevent polluted runoff, including:

- Have your septic system pumped every 3-5 years
- Properly dispose of kitchen grease. Don't pour it down the sink
- Wash your car on the lawn, rather than the driveway
- Use native vegetation in your landscaping
- Use pervious surfaces for driveways, sidewalks, and patio areas
- Minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides

If you would like more information on AUMERC's Clean Water Guardians program, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to "Clean Water Guardians", c/o Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center, 4170 Commanders Drive, Mobile, Alabama, 36615, or visit our website: <http://www.alearn.info/aumerc/>