

Clean Bayou

THE BAYOU-HOUSTON'S BIRTHPLACE-NEEDS HELP!

If you drop a poisonous substance into our community's water supply, the act would be considered a serious crime; a state of public emergency would be declared. But if you dump used automotive oil down a storm drain or sweep yard debris into the street gutter, no alarms are sounded and no news flashes are issued. Yet, everything that enters the storm sewer system eventually empties directly into our city's bayous. These substances destroy the natural balance of the bayou's ecosystem and de-

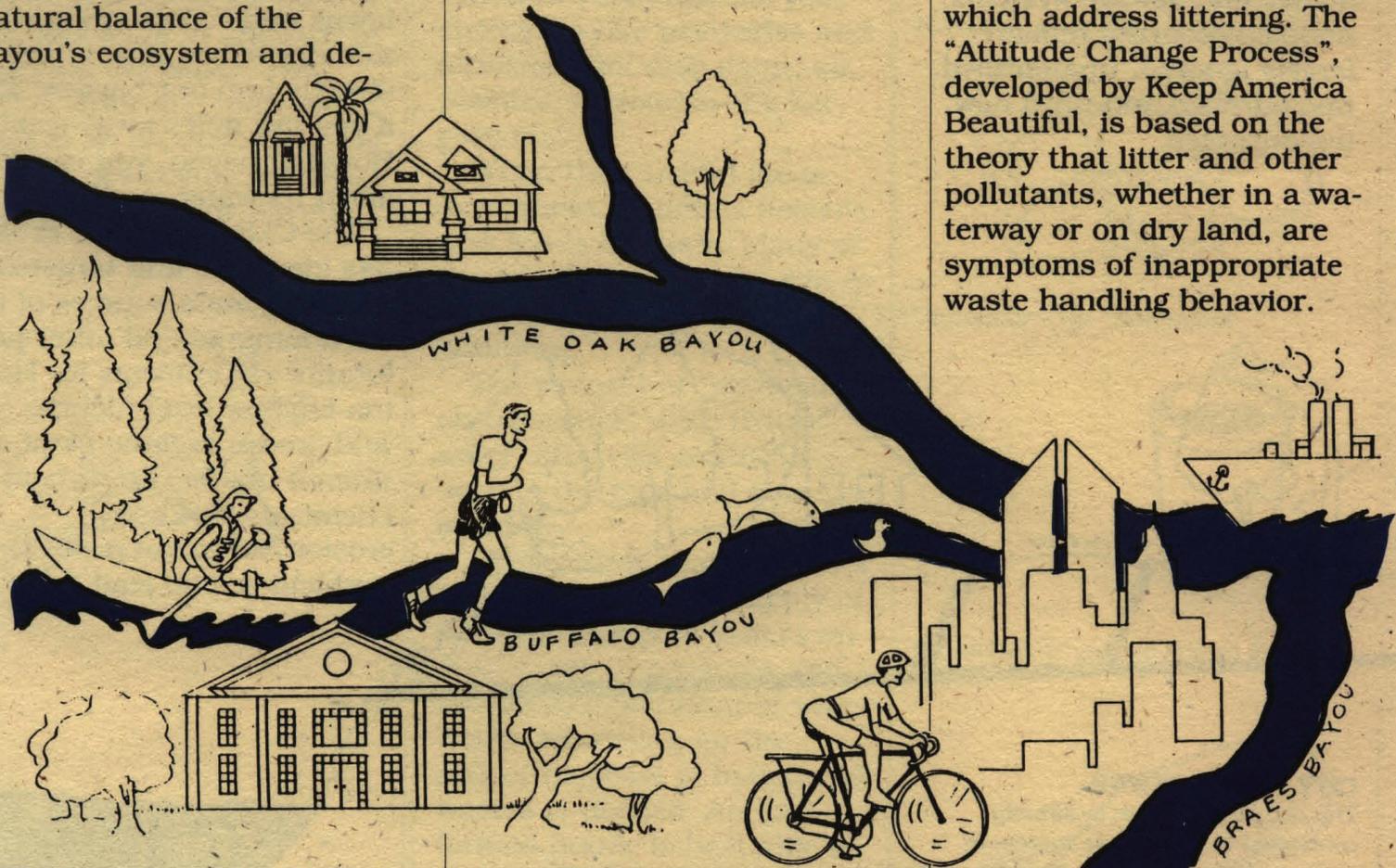
grade its water quality; in the case of debris, it becomes an eyesore as well. This type of nonpoint source pollution is called "storm water runoff"; its impact on Houston's bayou environments is serious.

WHY CLEAN THE BAYOUS NOW?

The CLEAN BAYOU Program of CLEAN HOUSTON was developed at the request of the Mayor's Buffalo Bayou Partnership the Partnership is seeking to redevelop the

bayou as a recreational amenity) to address the ever growing problem of storm water pollution. Conducted by a broad-based volunteer committee of environmental organizations, governmental agencies, academic and engineering specialists, the aim is to implement an education and involvement campaign directed at the Houston public.

The CLEAN BAYOU program is utilizing the same behavioral modification approach as is used in other CLEAN HOUSTON programs which address littering. The "Attitude Change Process", developed by Keep America Beautiful, is based on the theory that litter and other pollutants, whether in a waterway or on dry land, are symptoms of inappropriate waste handling behavior.



Help reduce bayou pollution

A Stormwater

WHAT IS STORMWATER POLLUTION?

Sources of water pollution are classified as point or non-point. Point sources are end-of-pipe discharges such as municipal sewage treatment plants or industrial treatment system discharges. Nonpoint sources are undefined discharges that cannot be traced to a specific point. They include storm water runoff from city streets, agricultural runoff from croplands and pastures and runoff from construction sites. It is estimated that more than half of the pollution to coastal waters stems from nonpoint sources that are generated from pollution of inland waterways. Despite serious efforts to clean up pollution from industry and sewage systems, nonpoint sources remain largely ignored, unidentified, uncontrolled and until now, unaddressed.

RAIN.

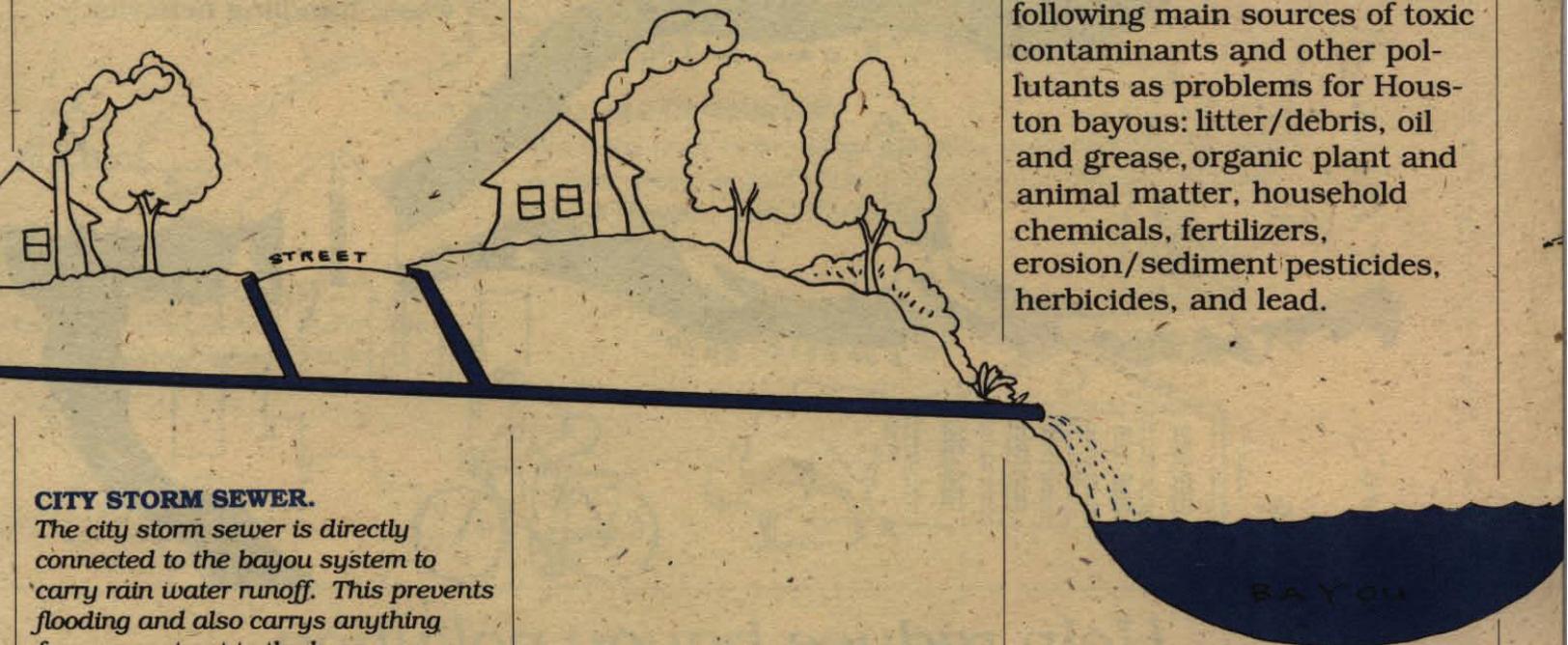
Simple rain storms can sweep debris, toxic substances, oil and grease into our city storm sewer lines and into our bayous.



WHERE DOES STORM WATER POLLUTION COME FROM?

A simple rain storm can cause serious pollution to our streams and bayous. Where stormwater cannot soak into the earth, it runs off, filling street gutters and washing off exposed land. It sweeps accumulated dust, dirt, debris, organic chemicals, vegetation, toxic substances, heavy metals, oil, grease and ordinary litter from roads, parking lots, lawns and construction sites into city storm sewer lines and directly into our bayous. Even if you live miles away from a Houston bayou, you can still affect its water quality.

The CLEAN BAYOU Program has identified and targeted the following main sources of toxic contaminants and other pollutants as problems for Houston bayous: litter/debris, oil and grease, organic plant and animal matter, household chemicals, fertilizers, erosion/sediment pesticides, herbicides, and lead.



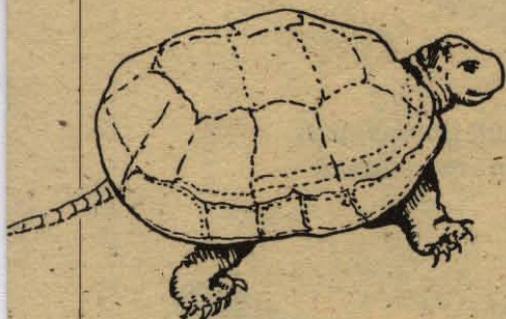
CITY STORM SEWER.

The city storm sewer is directly connected to the bayou system to carry rain water runoff. This prevents flooding and also carries anything from your street to the bayou.

Pollution Primer

DOES STORMWATER POLLUTION AFFECT OUR BAYOUS?

Pollutants from our property and streets washed into the bayou destroy the natural balance of the bayou's ecosystem. Herbicides, pesticides, heavy metals and other toxic chemicals are poisons which can kill fish and other aquatic wildlife. Decomposition of grass clippings, leaves, and other plant and animal matter removes valuable oxygen from the water, reducing what is available to sustain the natural habitat. Nitrates and other nutrients from fertilizers encourage excessive growth of algae and other microorganisms which upset nature's delicate balance. Sediment from storm water runoff causes a host of other problems in addition to muddying the water. The effect of litter and man-made debris is an an overwhelming eye sore, destroying the aesthetic quality of our bayous.



DO LIFESTYLES CONTRIBUTE TO STORM WATER POLLUTION?

Our affluent society uses more of almost everything. American households use materials that didn't exist a hundred years ago-not just chemicals like pesticides and fertilizers but also paint, oil, plastics, styrofoam-the list goes on.

When their useful life is over, these materials become new kinds of waste. Many of these materials are foreign to nature and require special handling.

The concept of "planned obsolescence" and "throw away" lifestyles contribute both to the type and quantity of waste.

The attitude that there is a seemingly limitless supply of natural resources fosters an oversupply of products and increased generation of waste. Public education on the proper disposal of household wastes is needed. An informed public is best able to remedy the problem of storm water pollution.

SOME THINGS LAST FOREVER

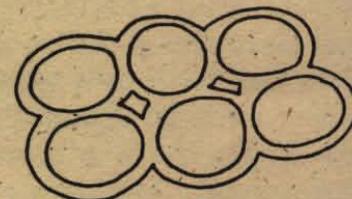
In our throw away society we have become accustomed to disposable products. See how long the following items take to "disappear".

Tin Can - 100 years



Aluminum Can - 200 to 500 years

Plastic 6 - pack cover - 450 years



Styrofoam Cup - 500 years



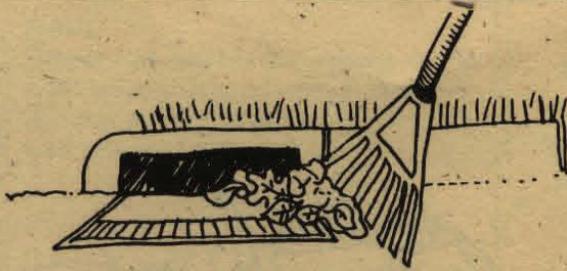
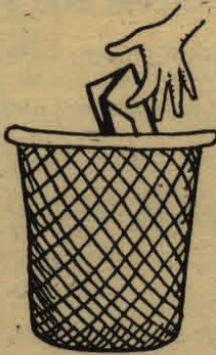
Glass Bottle - no one knows for sure



What Can You Do About Stormwater Pollution?

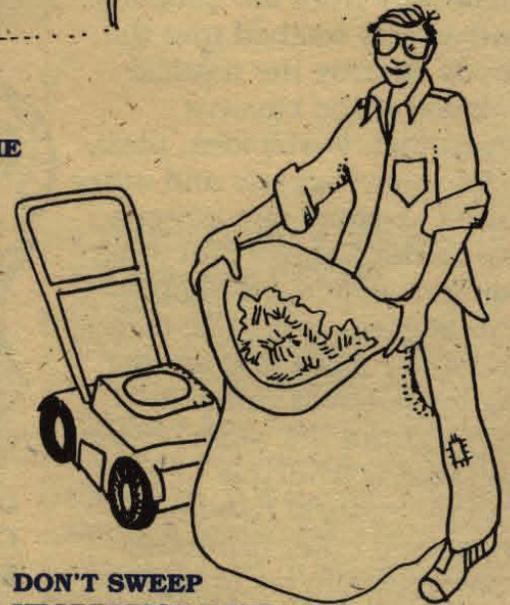
DON'T LITTER.

Anything carelessly thrown on the streets anywhere in Houston eventually ends up in our bayous.



DON'T PUT ANYTHING DOWN THE STORM SEWERS.

Please be careful. They are designed for rainwater. That is all.

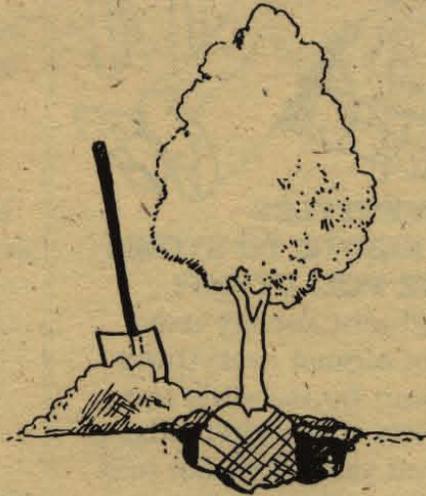
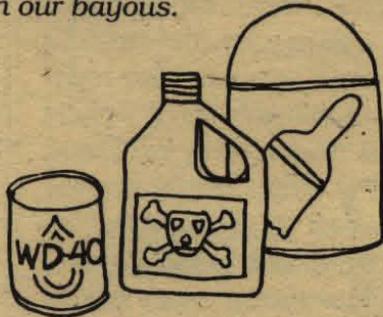


DON'T SWEEP VEGETATION DOWN THE STORM SEWER.

Grass clippings, leaves and other vegetation are damaging to water quality. The decomposition process robs the water of oxygen essential for aquatic life. Don't sweep vegetation down the storm sewer. Bag it or compost it.

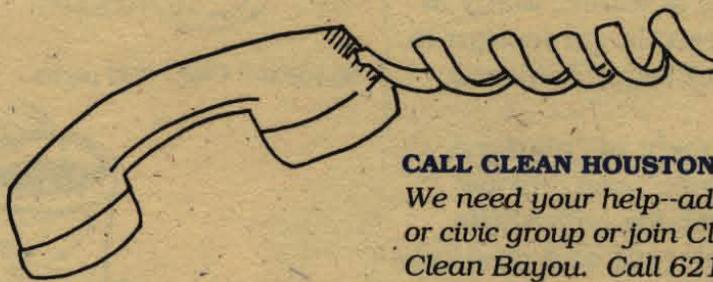
BE CAREFUL WITH CHEMICALS

Don't buy or use excessive pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers and don't use them in areas immediately adjacent to the curb, sidewalk or driveway.



PREVENT EROSION

Plan your yard or business to prevent erosion and landscape to minimize rainwater runoff.



CALL CLEAN HOUSTON.

We need your help--adopt a bayou trail with your church or civic group or join Clean Houston to learn more about Clean Bayou. Call 621-7020.

CLEAN HOUSTON

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