

Cobb County and District Runner-up Winner  
Jolee Northrop  
Hightower Trail Middle School  
Sixth Grade

## Storming Through Pollution

It was a hot, summer day on Lake Lanier, and I had no idea what storm water pollution was, but was about to find out. My mother, sister, and I were sailing in our sunfish when I fell overboard. When my mother and sister tried to grab me, we all became water molecules. Then, my adventure began.

The blazing sun boiled us until we could no longer stay on the earth. As we sailed toward the clouds, my mother said, "We are evaporating!" I saw smoke coming from a nearby factory, and the exhaust from cars on GA-400 was rising toward us. The toxic chemicals joined our cloud eagerly. When too many water particles condensed, we all fell down.

I landed on someone's roof, carrying parts of every shingle I passed over. We funneled down through the gutter and landed on a concrete driveway. Some water particles had picked up sediment on the driveway and were now coming to join us. As we ran over the street, we passed through some slick oil. The oily particles flowed with us as we traveled down the impervious street. We scoured the street for an exit as we glided along.

A car drove by, splashing us onto someone's lawn. As we flowed down the hill, pesticide, insecticide, and fertilizer joined with some water particles. The insecticides and pesticide poisoned organisms as we rolled along. When we sailed through a park, we heaved trash, left by people of all ages, on top of us.

Before we knew it, we were spiraling through a drain on the side of the road. We flowed through a tunnel underground and soon reached a storm water retention pond. Engineers had designed this pond so that there would be enough room for us to get to the river without major impact and to clean the water before it reached the river. Some of my friends went through plants and came out free of pollutants. The microorganisms that were supposed to clean us were killed by the oil. I had to go through a screen, which filtered out trash, to continue to the river.

When we got to the river, all the pollutants we had picked up started to cause damage. Oil caused fish to become very sick or even die. Algae started to grow because of the fertilizer we brought. I hoped an animal won't get sick by eating candy wrappers. The sediment we deposited covered up all the fish eggs we passed.

We ended up in Lake Lanier. When we passed our boat, we became human again! I stretched out in the warm sand after arriving at the shore. "Mama?" I asked. "Let's pick up the litter left by that family. I don't want any gulls to get strangled in these plastic loops." We picked up their litter and threw it in the trash. It sure felt good to make a difference. You can, too!