

# THE LAKE MERRITT INSTITUTE

(Lake Trash Removal, Fountains, Education, Lake Expertise)

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## VOLUNTEER LETTER

**December Trash Talk:** Mother Nature finally opened the storm door, and the resulting rain (5.33 inches and rising) brought in its usual load of trash. One hundred thirty seven people removed 264 bags of the nasty stuff, along with large pieces of wood, an electronic cash register, a rice & tobacco shrine, a shoe and a Nemo toy. With three days to go, the total taken to the transfer station was 7,600 pounds. The fact that this is similar to November's 7,580 pounds shows how the first flush brings in just as much trash with less rain (1.83 inches in November). Note; all numbers are as of December 29<sup>th</sup>.



**Sediment Pollution:** Trash may be the most visible pollution in our Lake, but mud, paint, oil, soap and other chemicals also make living difficult for the myriad of animals that need clean water to survive.

Sediment from storm drains as shown here contributes to making Lake Merritt shallow, which encourages algae and widgeon grass growth, and eventually requires expensive dredging.

**Help Is On The Way:** As any good Lake Merritt Volunteer knows, 60 storm drains from 4,650 acres flow into our downtown Lake. In 2001, a storm drain filter was installed on one of these outfalls (#5). Now, thanks to measure DD, two more filters are in the planning stages. Construction crews will soon be digging holes for continuous deflection separation (CDS) type filters at outfalls 2 (by the Nature Center) and 4 (at the end of Staten Avenue). After installation, these pipes, 33 and 24 inches in diameter respectively, will no longer dump their load of trash into the Lake. Another filter by the Cameron Stanford house is being postponed until construction plans for that area are prepared.

Filters cannot be installed near the Lake at the big outfalls, but could be placed upstream (above tidal flows). Catching trash at upstream locations would also provide protection for creeks. For areas where tidal water inundates the big storm drains, such as below Lakeshore Avenue, filters on individual curb inlets could be considered. Until then, we will continue to rely on volunteers to keep on removing trash from Lake Merritt.

**Happy New Year** to all out there, except the litterbugs.