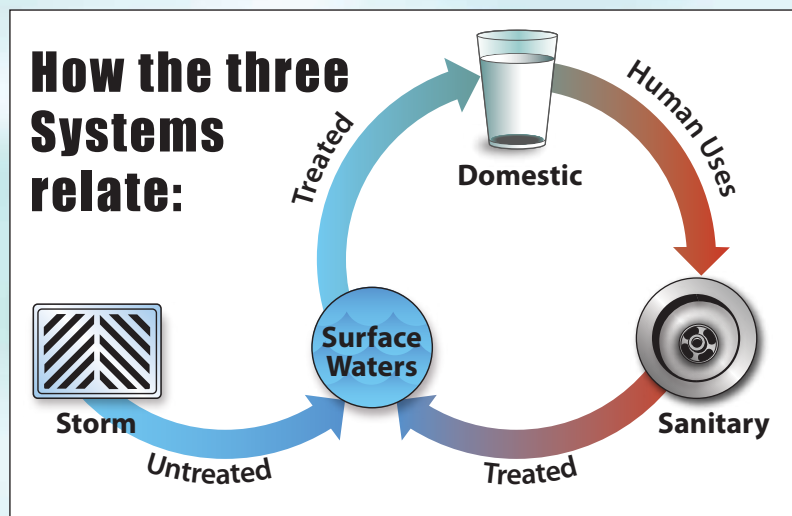


GSFC's Water Systems

Three Water Systems and You - GSFC has three main water systems: the incoming water supply, or domestic water; along with two outgoing water systems, the sanitary and storm sewers. As an employee, you interact with each of these systems on a daily basis, probably without even realizing it. As stewards of the Center's lands and environmental assets, all of us must be informed of their importance and make responsible decisions to protect and conserve these valuable resources.



Domestic (Potable) Water System –

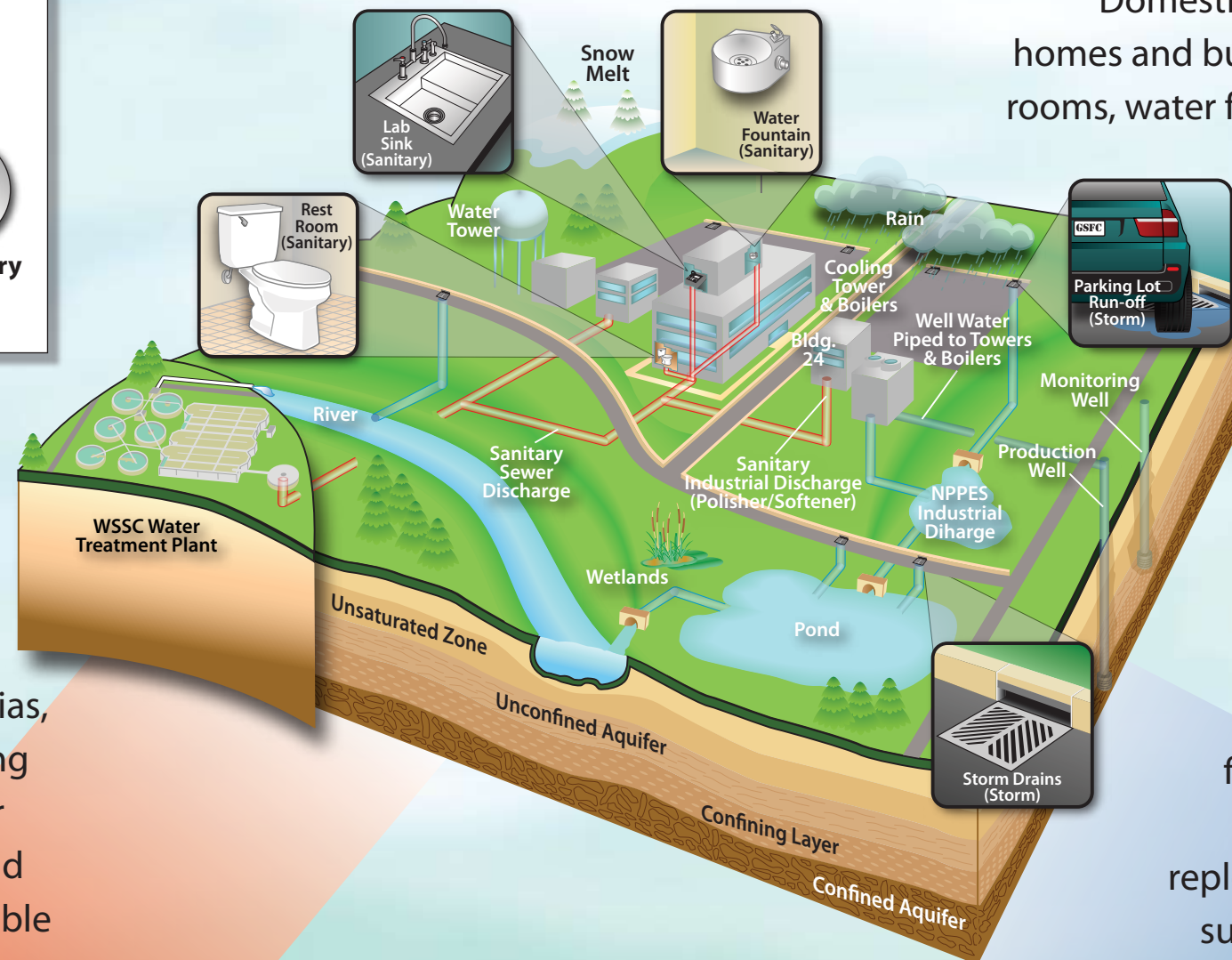
Domestic water is the incoming water supplied to homes and businesses for typical functions such as rest rooms, water fountains, sinks, faucets, and fire hydrants.

The water initially comes from nearby rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and wells, and is then treated to ensure it is safe for human consumption. GSFC obtains its water from a public-supplied system, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC).

Sanitary Sewer System –

Everything sent down the toilets and sinks inside buildings, including water and chemicals in labs or grease in the cafeterias, is sent to the sanitary sewer. This outgoing water is regularly monitored by WSSC for multiple contaminants. Employees should never pour chemicals or other questionable substances down the drain without first consulting Environmental. This wastewater is received at a treatment plant for cleaning, and eventually discharged to surface waters.

<http://environment.gsfc.nasa.gov>



Storm Sewer System –

Water falling as rain or snow flows across streets or overland into storm drains, small creeks, or into the ground to replenish groundwater. As it flows over paved surfaces, the water picks up pollutants from vehicles, salt from roads, sediment, trash, etc.

GSFC also discharges wastewater from our boiler and cooling tower processes (for heating and cooling of buildings) to ponds on Center, which are part of the storm system. Storm drains and creeks flow into larger and larger water bodies, eventually into the Chesapeake Bay. **This water does not pass through a treatment system.**