Additional Resources

Dakota County Soil and Water
Conservation District
4100 220th Street West, Suite 102
Farmington, MN 55024
www.dakotacountyswcd.org

Blue Thumb program
by the Rice Creek Watershed District
4325 Pheasant Ridge Dr. NE, Suite 611
Blaine, MN 55449
www.bluethumb.org

Friends of the Mississippi River
360 North Robert Street, Suite 400
Saint Paul, MN 55101
www.fmr.org

This information brought to you by
City of Mendota Heights

City of Mendota Heights
1101 Victoria Curve
Mendota Heights, MN 55118
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Do you care…

about water quality?

HERE ARE SOME SIMPLE STEPS TO IMPROVE OUR PONDS, WETLANDS, LAKES, STREAMS AND RIVERS

The quality of Minnesota's ponds, wetlands, lakes, streams and rivers are threatened by development and pollution.

When it rains, the storm water that runs off driveways, lawns, houses and parking lots can carry pollutants like oil, paint and chemicals down storm sewers and into nearby ponds, wetlands, lakes, streams and rivers.

In new developments, filtering or treating storm water runoff is required with projects like ponds or rain gardens.

We cannot simply build our way out of poor water quality. We must take steps to reduce water pollution. By taking the following easy; no-cost or low-cost steps, you can have a big impact on reducing runoff and protecting our water resources and wildlife habitat.

1. FERTILIZE SMART

Make sure your fertilizer is phosphorus-free. Sweep up fertilizer that spills onto hard surfaces. Soils in our area already contain enough phosphorus to maintain most lawns. Excess phosphorus washes away into nearby lakes or streams where it feeds algae. Algae blooms stress fish and wildlife, and they make swimming and fishing unpleasant or impossible.

2. GRASS - DON'T BLOW IT OFF

Blow or rake grass clippings and leaves out of the street. Leave them on your lawn, use them for compost, or bag them up. Grass clippings and leaves in the street end up in the storm sewer, where they are carried to nearby lakes and streams. Clippings and leaves contain phosphorus and other nutrients that - like fertilizer - feed algae and other aquatic plants.

3. USE YOUR RUNOFF

Direct your downspouts onto your lawn or garden or into a rain barrel. Use rainwater to water your lawn and garden. It is free, naturally soft and perfect for keeping green things growing. Using rainwater reduces runoff, which carries pollutants to lakes and streams.

4. SCOOP THE POOP

Grab a bag when you grab the leash, and pick up after your pets. When pet waste is left behind, rainwater washes it into lakes and streams. Pet waste contains bacteria that can cause illness. It also contains nutrients that can cause excessive algae blooms in lakes and streams.

5. USE CHEMICALS WISELY

Use chemical products according to label directions. Consider alternative or natural remedies to control weeds and pests. Read the label before using herbicides and pesticides, and apply according to directions. Use the minimum amount needed to control the problem. If you can; consider using alternative or natural remedies, or remove the problem by hand.

6. KEEP A HEALTHY LAWN

Aerate your lawn, seed bare patches and mow at a higher setting. Healthy lawns are good for the environment. A healthy, vigorous lawn needs less watering, fewer chemicals and less maintenance. Aerate your lawn periodically to loosen the soil. Seed bare patches to prevent erosion and soil loss. Mow at a higher setting. Grass mowed to a height of 2.5 to 3 inches develops deeper, healthier roots and has a competitive advantage over weeds.

7. PLANT A RAIN GARDEN

Capture, clean and infiltrate rainwater that would otherwise run off your property. Rain gardens are planted depressions designed to store rainwater and allow it to soak into the soil. Find out more about rain gardens at www.bluethumb.org.

8. REPLACE TURF WITH NATIVE PLANTS

Swap some of your high-maintenance lawn for low-maintenance native ground cover; plants or grasses. Many native plants develop deeper root structures than turf grass, which reduces runoff by allowing for better water infiltration. Check with your city for any landscaping ordinances. More information on designing a native garden is available at www.bluethumb.org.

9. REDUCE YOUR FOOTPRINT

Replace some pavement - such as a walk, patio or driveway - with pavers or pervious pavement. The porous surface will allow water to seep through, reducing the amount of water that runs off into the storm sewer.

10. ADOPT A STORM DRAIN

Keep neighborhood storm drains free of leaves, seeds and grass clippings. Storm drains are directly connected to the nearest body of water. Water running into storm drains can carry with it anything dumped nearby including leaves, grass Clippings, soil, oil, paint and chemicals. Keeping storm drains clear will protect the water quality of nearby lakes, streams and rivers.

11. VEGETATIVE BUFFER

A vegetative buffer adjacent to a wetland not only helps protect the wetland; in many cases, it is required by city ordinance. The City of Mendota Heights recommends the following activities allowed in designated buffers.

1. Trees cannot be planted in a wetland buffer. They shade out other wetland plants, killing them and altering the wetland.

2. Existing trees (even dead trees) cannot be removed from a wetland unless permitted by the City.

3. The only mowing allowed in a wetland buffer is that which is prescribed for native plant management.

4. Use of ATVs or snowmobiles is not allowed in a wetland buffer.

5. Landscaping with plants, mulch, rock or other landscape material is not allowed in a wetland buffer. However, you can replace noxious and invasive, non-native plants with native plants (excluding trees) adapted to the habitat of the wetland.

6. Herbicides may only be used to remove noxious and invasive, non-native plants, and must be done in strict accordance with product guidelines.

7. Composting or disposing of leaves and grass is not allowed in a wetland buffer.