

Fact Sheet: Homeowner Actions

Did you know ... Your everyday actions water quality. It doesn't matter where you live—what you do in your yard affects the health of local bodies of water.

Stormwater that runs off your yard and driveway eventually makes its way to the lake – often faster than you think! That water not only adds to lake levels, it also carries sediment, nutrients, and other harmful chemicals into the lake. Any time you keep water where it falls, you prevent problems to our lakes. Simple actions such as directing downspouts to grassy areas, managing leaves, minimizing salt use, or cleaning up after your pet all add up to big improvements for our lakes and streams. "Clean Water Starts With Me!"



Rain gardens infiltrate water from your yard and prevent it from entering our lakes. *Photo credit: Emmons and Oliver Resources.*

Restore Your Shoreline—Prevent Erosion

Having native plants between your lawn and a lake or stream is an easy and inexpensive way to protect against erosion and pollution. Unlike turf grass, native plantings reduce wave energy, hold shoreline soil in place, and provide habitat for turtles, birds, and other wildlife. They also filter chemical and fertilizer runoff from your lawn, which means cleaner water, better fishing, and more recreational enjoyment.



Shorelines with native vegetation are more resistant to erosion caused by watercraft use and flooding.

Reduce Stormwater Runoff

Collecting, reusing, and infiltrating rain water on your property all help to protect water quality and reduce the intensity of flooding. There are many options for doing your part, some of which also address nutrient concerns. You can minimize water runoff on your property by using:

- Downspout Disconnections
- Rain Barrels
- Rain Gardens
- Green Roofs
- Porous Pavement

FAST FACTS

• **Nutrients Affect Water Health:**

One pound of phosphorus can produce up to 500 pounds of algae!

• **Act to Protect Water Quality:**

- Reduce stormwater runoff
- Prevent erosion
- Minimize nutrients in our waters
- Remove snow before using salts
- Control waste

• **Ask for Technical Assistance:**

The PLSLWD is happy to offer resources and even funding for projects which protect water quality. Call 952-447-4166.



Leaves and grass clippings can lead to an accumulation of phosphorus in waterbodies.

Keep Nutrients Out of Our Waters

Nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, are natural and play an important role in keeping plants healthy, but when excess amounts accumulate in our waterbodies they can cause trouble. For example, only one pound of phosphorus can promote the growth of up to 500 pounds of algae. Keeping nutrients on your property supports water quality and the health of your plants. When determining how to take care of your yard, consider the following:

- Choose grasses and flowers that use less water
- Rake and collect your leaves, or mulch them to use on your property
- Landscape naturally with native plants
- Add a buffer between your lawn and waterbodies
- Reduce fertilizer use
- Reduce (or eliminate) pesticide use

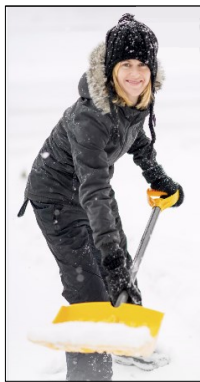
Properly Store and Dispose of Household Products

Motor oil, gasoline, leftover paint, and pesticides are all common household products that can create big problems if they reach our lakes, streams, and wetlands. Store these and similar products indoors, in water-proof containers. NEVER dispose of these materials in storm drains, which do not lead to a treatment plant, but are directly connected to our lakes, streams, and wetlands.

Fortunately, Scott County offers free options for disposing of household hazardous wastes and pharmaceuticals. Call 952-496-8652 or visit www.scottcountymn.gov for drop-off locations and times.



Hazardous products should be stored indoors, in water-proof containers. Photo credit: MPCA.



Reduce Salt Use

All de-icers, including rock salt, are harmful to our environment. When snow melts, de-icers travel to our lakes and rivers through storm drains. Just one teaspoon of salt can pollute five gallons of water, and it never disappears or breaks down. The only way to keep salt out of our environment is to minimize usage in the first place. To reduce the impact on salts to our environment try these tips:

- Remove as much snow as possible with a shovel or snow blower
- Choose the correct products - different products work at different temperatures.
- Use sand for traction instead of rock salt.
- Less than 4 cups of product will cover an average two-car driveway and sidewalk.

Manage Animal Waste

Even Fido's actions can affect water quality! Poorly managed animal waste can present a serious threat to our soil, groundwater, our fish and our health. Contaminants in animal waste contain E-coli bacteria, phosphorus, and other nutrients that cause excessive aquatic plant and algae growth.



Image credit: TopDogTips.

PRIOR LAKE – SPRING LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT

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Mission: to manage and preserve the water resources of the Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District to the best of our ability using input from our communities, sound engineering practices, and our ability to efficiently fund beneficial projects.