



**Minnesota is known  
for its abundance  
of water resources.**

However, the quality of lakes, streams and wetlands in Minnesota is threatened by increasing development and pollution.

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

In new developments, filtering or treating stormwater runoff with projects like stormwater ponds is required.

However, we cannot simply build our way out of poor water quality. We must also 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.

Bassett Creek  
Watershed Management Commission

[www.bassettcreekwmo.org](http://www.bassettcreekwmo.org)



Elm Creek  
Watershed Management Commission

[www.elmcreekwatershed.org](http://www.elmcreekwatershed.org)



Shingle Creek  
Watershed Management Commission

[www.shinglecreek.org](http://www.shinglecreek.org)



West Mississippi  
Watershed Management Commission

[www.shinglecreek.org](http://www.shinglecreek.org)



Pioneer-Sarah Creek  
Watershed Management Commission

[www.pioneersarahcreek.org](http://www.pioneersarahcreek.org)



Hennepin County  
Environmental Services

[www.hennepin.us/water](http://www.hennepin.us/water)



TEN THINGS

YOU CAN DO

TO IMPROVE

MINNESOTA'S

LAKES AND

STREAMS



# Make a difference



## 1 FERTILIZE SMART

**Be 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 make it unpleasant or impossible to swim or fish.

## 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 your 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.

# Make a bigger difference

## 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 ½ 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](http://www.bluethumb.org).

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## 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. More information on designing a native garden is available at [www.bluethumb.org](http://www.bluethumb.org).

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## REDUCE YOUR FOOTPRINT

**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.

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## ADOPT A STORM DRAIN

**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.