



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

However, the quality of Minnesota's lakes, streams and wetlands 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.

We cannot simply build our way out of poor water quality, though. 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.

For more information, visit:

Hennepin County
Environmental Services
www.hennepin.us/water

■
Bassett Creek
Watershed Management Commission
www.bassettcreekwmo.org

■
Elm Creek
Watershed Management Commission
www.elmcreekwatershed.org

■
Shingle Creek
Watershed Management Commission
www.shinglecreek.org

■
West Mississippi
Watershed Management Commission
www.shinglecreek.org

■
Pioneer-Sarah Creek
Watershed Management Commission
www.pioneersarahcreek.org

■
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District
www.minnehahacreek.org

■
Nine Mile Creek Watershed District
www.ninemilecreek.org



**TEN THINGS
YOU CAN DO
TO IMPROVE
MINNESOTA'S
LAKES, RIVERS
AND STREAMS** ▶

Make a difference.

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.

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.



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.