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| Hbold600pxw | Hennepin County Environment and Energy **News**612-348-3777 • environment@hennepin.us [www.hennepin.us/environmentaleducation](http://www.hennepin.us/environmentaleducation) 701 Fourth Ave. S., Suite 700, Minneapolis, MN 55415 |

Contact: Alisa Reckinger, Environment and Energy, 612-348-4788, alisa.reckinger@hennepin.us

Last updated: January 2016

Subject: Protect water quality

**Sample Newsletter Article**

**Five things you can to do protect our lakes and streams**

Minnesota is home to thousands of lakes, rivers and streams that are threatened by increasing development and pollution. While it may seem like protecting water quality in Minnesota is out of your control, there are many easy and inexpensive steps you can take to make a positive impact on water resources.

Get started by taking these five actions:

1. **Use your runoff**: Keep water in your yard and reduce runoff by directing downspouts onto your lawn or garden or into a rain barrel. Rainwater is free and naturally "soft," so it is ideal to use in watering your lawn or garden.
2. **Don’t rake grass clippings and leaves into the street:** Leave them on your lawn, use them for compost, or bag them up. Grass clippings and leaves left 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 feed algae and other aquatic plants. This can cause excess algae growth that can negatively impact other plants and wildlife and can be unsafe for pets.
3. **Scoop the poop:** Grab a bag when you grab the leash and pick up after your pets. Pet waste left on the ground can be washed into lakes and rivers with rainwater and runoff. Pet waste contains bacteria that can cause illness in humans and animals.
4. **Use chemicals wisely:** Read and follow the label instructions when using herbicides and pesticides. Use the minimum amount needed to control the problem. If you can, consider using alternative or natural remedies to control weeds and pests, or remove the problem by hand.
5. **Fertilize smart:** Sweep up any fertilizer that spills onto hard surfaces. Excess fertilizer washes away into nearby lakes or streams where it can feed algae, causing rapid growth known as algae blooms. Algae blooms stress fish and wildlife and make swimming and fishing unpleasant or impossible.

Learn more at [www.hennepin.us/residents/environment/protecting-land-water](http://www.hennepin.us/residents/environment/protecting-land-water).

**Sample Web Story**

**Protect Minnesota’s Water Resources**

Minnesotans love their lakes, streams and rivers. Protect Minnesota’s water resources by keeping harmful nutrients like phosphorus out of lakes, streams and rivers.

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1. **Use your runoff**: Keep water in your yard and reduce runoff by directing downspouts onto your lawn or garden or into a rain barrel.
2. **Don’t rake grass clippings and leaves into the street:** Leave them on your lawn, use them for compost, or bag them up.
3. **Scoop the poop:** Grab a bag when you grab the leash and pick up after your pets. Pet waste contains bacteria that, when left on the ground, can be washed into lakes and rivers with rainwater and runoff.
4. **Use chemicals wisely:** Read and follow the label instructions when using herbicides and pesticides. Use the minimum amount needed to control the problem. If you can, consider using alternative or natural remedies to control weeds and pests, or remove the problem by hand.
5. **Fertilize smart:** Sweep up any fertilizer that spills onto hard surfaces. Excess fertilizer washes away into nearby lakes or streams where it can feed algae, causing rapid growth known as algae blooms.

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**Sample Social Media Posts**

*Interact with Hennepin Environment on Facebook at* [*www.facebook.com/hennepinenvironment*](http://www.facebook.com/hennepinenvironment) *and Twitter at* [*www.twitter.com/hennepinenviro*](http://www.twitter.com/hennepinenviro) *(@hennepinenviro).*

**Facebook:**

Direct your gutter downspouts onto your lawn or garden or into a rain barrel and use the collected rainwater to water your lawn or garden. You’ll save money on water and help prevent pollution carried to lakes and streams. [Learn more about actions you can take to protect water](http://www.hennepin.us/residents/environment/protecting-land-water).

Grab a bag when you grab the leash and pick up after your pets. Pet waste contains bacteria that, when left on the ground, can be washed into lakes and rivers with rainwater and runoff. [Learn more about actions you can take to protect water](http://www.hennepin.us/residents/environment/protecting-land-water).

Use lawn and garden chemicals wisely. Read and follow the label instructions, use the minimum amount needed to control the problem, and consider using alternative or natural remedies to control weeds and pests, or remove the problem by hand. [Learn more about actions you can take to protect water](http://www.hennepin.us/residents/environment/protecting-land-water).

Protect our lakes and streams by keeping grass clippings and leaves out of the street. Leave them on your lawn, use them for compost, or bag them up instead. [Learn more about actions you can take to protect water](http://www.hennepin.us/residents/environment/protecting-land-water).

**Twitter:**
Remember to grab a bag when you grab the leash! Pick up after your pets to ensure pet waste doesn’t end up in local lakes and streams. [Learn more](http://www.hennepin.us/residents/environment/protecting-land-water).

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**Additional Promotional Materials**

*Order printed materials at* [*www.hennepin.us/literatureorderform*](http://www.hennepin.us/literatureorderform)*.*

[Ten Things You Can Do to Improve Minnesota’s Lakes, Rivers and Streams brochure (PDF)](http://www.hennepin.us/~/media/hennepinus/residents/environment/documents/water-quality-brochure.pdf)