

# SAVE OUR STREAMS ONE LAWN AT A TIME



## PROTECTING, PRESERVING AND RESTORING COLORADO'S CLEAN WATER STARTS WITH YOU.

We've all seen water running in the streets and gutters after a rain or snow storm. Wonder where it goes? Straight into our local waterways. Why does it matter?

Because along the way, the stormwater picks up all of the "gunk" on streets and sidewalks— including fertilizers, pet waste, leaves, grass clippings, and other pollutants. The result? Nutrient pollution in our lakes and rivers.

Nutrient pollution is not only unsightly, it degrades our water quality. Excess nitrogen and phosphorus is the root causes of nutrient pollution and causes an overgrowth of algae, ultimately removing oxygen from lakes and rivers— endangering fish, lessening the recreational opportunities of lakes and rivers, degrading water quality, and eventually leading to a decline in safe drinking water.

**You can help save our waterways.** Incorporating sustainable landscaping practices can help to reduce nutrient pollution in stormwater runoff. It can also lead to healthier plants and lawns that need less pesticides and fertilize and minimize water use.

Simple ways that you **can** make a difference:

- **Apply the right amount of fertilizer according to the instructions.** Clean up any spills and dispose properly.
- **Test the soil to determine its nutrient needs.** A soil nutrient analysis kit is available at most home improvement stores and is an easy, inexpensive way to determine what your lawn really needs and can reduce costly inputs like water, fertilizer, pesticides, and unwanted nutrient runoff.
- **Fertilizing in the early fall promotes healthy root systems** - leading to stronger more resilient lawns and plants.
- **Avoid blowing leaves and grass clippings into the street.** It's best that you compost or bag it instead.
- **Adjust sprinkler systems** based on weather conditions and repair leaks to reduce runoff.
- **Consider native plants** that naturally adapt to the environment and require less turf, water, and fertilizer.

*The goal of Stormwater Permittees for Local Awareness of Stream Health is to partner with the community to maximize our local water quality. Please share this with others in your organization or community and help us to protect, preserve, and restore Colorado's most valuable resource. For more information, please visit our website at [www.splashco.org](http://www.splashco.org).*



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STREAM HEALTH





# GREEN LAWNS DON'T HAVE TO EQUAL GREEN LAKES

Sure, we all want a great lawn. Doing it the right way ensures we get great water, too.

Excess nutrients, specifically nitrogen and phosphorus, pollute stormwater run-off from urban areas, contributing to the third greatest cause of lake deterioration in the US.



Leaf "litter" and landscape trash accounts for **56%** of phosphorus in urban stormwater, not to mention clogging storm drains and increasing debris in our streams and waterways.

Just one pound of fertilizer over-application on the average lawn can equate to **34.2 lbs.** of excess algae growth in streams and lakes...



The amount of phosphorus in grass clippings generated from just one lawn mowing can produce up to **100 lbs.** of unwanted algae if it ends up in our lakes and ponds.



...that's



for every 60 homes!

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

More than 100,000 miles of rivers and streams in the US are polluted with too much nitrogen and phosphorus, a distance that could stretch around the earth **4 times!**



Too much nutrients can cause rapid growth of algae, which removes oxygen from the water, attributing odors, and upsetting the aquatic ecosystem. This also directly leads to a decline in Colorado's drinking water quality.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### Dispose Properly

- Compost or bag your leaves and grass clippings
- Don't blow grass clippings into the street
- Hand pull weeds when possible
- Sweep up any spills or overspray of fertilizers on sidewalks or streets



### Turn It Down

- Adjust sprinkler systems based on weather, repair leaks, and reduce runoff
- Don't powerwash debris into the street
- Adjust fertilizer spreaders to apply the correct amount over areas. Fertilizer bags typically provide this information or ask at the local garden center



### Fertilize Effectively

- Fertilizing in the early fall promotes healthy root systems - leading to stronger, more resilient lawns and plants
- Watch the weather and make sure to not apply when storms will be approaching



### Choose Wisely

- Perform soil testing to determine the right amount of fertilizers to apply
- Consider using slow-release fertilizers with water-insoluble or slowly-soluble nutrients
- Planting species that are native to the region can decrease the amount of turf, water, and fertilizer needed



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