

# COMMUNITY CLEAN-UPS FOR WATER QUALITY



A Toolkit for Fighting  
Water Pollution in  
the Streets Near  
Your Home





In October 2012, some 27,000 Girl Scouts, parents and adult volunteers from the Girl Scouts of the Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys council conducted a massive Community Clean-Up for Water Quality.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND THANKS

The program, Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality, was originated by the Friends of the Minnesota Valley. Working with the Friends, hundreds of volunteers—adults and children—have removed leaves, grass clippings and other organic matter from streets and entrances to storm sewers in their communities. By collecting and composting that phosphorus-rich material since 2003, those volunteers have helped keep nuisance algae from growing in the Minnesota River Watershed.

Through the efforts of those volunteers and the organizations that brought them together, we now are able to bring Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality to all of Minnesota.

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# WHY COMMUNITY CLEAN-UPS FOR WATER QUALITY ARE IMPORTANT

Have you ever watched the rainwater running off your driveway or down your street after a summer thunderstorm or in the spring of the year when the rains wash away the dirt left after a long winter? Do you know where that water is going? You might be one of the approximately 50% of Minnesotans who understand that the stormwater running off our streets, driveways, and curbs drains into our creeks and lakes to larger streams and rivers. Storm drains carry runoff water from our yards and streets very efficiently and quickly. Most people have seen storm drains that water goes into, but few of us have seen the water flowing directly into our rivers immediately following a thunderstorm or spring rainfall. If we did observe the flow of that water, we would see paper, bottles, leaves, grass clippings, branches and dirt.



What we can't see, however, are all the different forms of dissolved organic matter (leaves, dirt, debris) flushed from our yards and streets. Organic material contains phosphorus and other plant nutrients that ultimately feed the growth of aquatic plants such as algae that degrade water quality. Even the visible leaves and grass clippings transported directly to water bodies will decompose eventually and release nutrients into the water, causing undesirable algae growth that diminishes oxygen for fish and native plants.

As leaves fall from the trees, they accumulate on impervious surface areas such as streets and



driveways where they begin to decompose, releasing phosphorus that can be carried in runoff water into nearby bodies of water. As cars travel over these leaves, they contribute to their decomposition. As rain falls, the leaves are carried directly into lakes and rivers.

In Minnesota, our landscapes and soils are frozen for a portion of the year. This freeze/thaw cycle helps to break down organic materials such as grass clippings and leaves into nutrients. However, they are not able to infiltrate into the frozen ground, so any late fall or early spring rains move these materials rapidly over the land, even over a lawn. In fact, research shows that phosphorus concentrations in runoff waters are highest when the ground is frozen.

Cleaning up our curbs and gutters will prevent the highly nutrient-rich leaves and debris from entering rivers, lakes and streams, reducing pollution at the source and improving water quality for local communities. Fight water pollution in the streets near your home today.



# Q&A

## COMMUNITY CLEAN-UPS FOR WATER QUALITY

### What are Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality?

Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality are local projects that prevent water pollution. Any person, group or organization can participate in a clean-up. Previous clean-ups have been conducted by Boy Scouts, church groups, students as part of science projects, school clubs, conservation organizations, corporations and other civic organizations. Volunteers rake, sweep, bag and remove loose dirt and leaves blocking sewer grates on city streets. The material is then composted to prevent excessive nutrients such as phosphorus from entering lakes, rivers and streams.

### Why are Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality important?

Rainstorms and snowmelt wash leaves and loose dirt into our stormwater systems and into our lakes, rivers and streams. As the material decays, phosphorus enters waterways and pollutes lakes, rivers and streams by causing excessive growth of aquatic plants such as algae which decrease oxygen levels in the water and contribute to unhealthy conditions for fish and other aquatic organisms. By cleaning up organic materials from yards in the spring and fall, a community can significantly reduce pollution. Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality play an important role in removing phosphorus from water bodies. Stormwater runoff is a leading cause of the water quality problems in our lakes, rivers and streams. Currently, 40% of

our water bodies are polluted, threatening our use of those waters for fishing and swimming. This is a locally led community pollution prevention project that helps to begin the process of reclaiming our lakes, rivers and streams.

Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality also help meet the requirements of municipal stormwater programs by providing valuable public education and outreach and engaging citizens to participate in stormwater pollution problems. Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality make good economic sense as well.

### How are Clean-Ups conducted?

Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality are fun, cost-effective and produce measurable results. There has been much success since this program was instituted in 2003 in the Minnesota River Watershed by the Friends of the Minnesota Valley. In October 2012, some 27,000 Girl Scouts, parents and adult volunteers conducted a massive Community Clean-Up for Water Quality in Minnesota and parts of Wisconsin. Girls from the Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin River Valleys council raked and bagged 2 million pounds of leaves, soil and organic debris from streets, parks and other public spaces.

Their work helped fight the nutrient-fed excess algae growth that often chokes surface waters in urban areas. The Scouts also stenciled 7,000 storm sewers with anti-pollution messages, such as: "Please Don't Pollute. Drains To Mississippi River."

### How do we begin?

Community Clean-Ups are usually scheduled in April, but can also be scheduled in October or November. Join with friends, neighborhood groups or organizations to sponsor a Community Clean-Up for Water Quality in your neighborhood. It's easy—all you need are gloves, rakes, brooms, shovels and bags to clean up the debris. Start by scheduling a Community Clean-Up Day and





# Q&A

## COMMUNITY CLEAN-UPS FOR WATER QUALITY



contacting your local city, park or maintenance department. Notify other community members so they can participate by individually cleaning areas in front of their homes, recording the number of bags and taking them to the compost site or placing them on the boulevard for pickup on your specific day.

We can all help by keeping our streets clean of leaves and other materials by raking or sweeping during the growing season, but especially during spring and fall. Leaves can be used as mulch in other areas of the landscape or composted to benefit soil health in the future. If we remove leaves and debris from in front of each of our homes we can contribute to cleaner runoff and ultimately cleaner water entering our lakes, rivers and streams.



### Doesn't street sweeping pick up all the leaves and trash?

The goal of these clean-ups is to catch the winter's accumulation of decaying leaves and other organic material before spring rains wash it through the sewers to lakes and streams. Fall clean-ups are also helpful because leaves are removed before they begin to decay. Many streets may not be swept by city crews until after the first significant spring rainfall. Plan your clean-up before street sweeping occurs.

### How will this help our lakes, rivers and streams?

Stormwater runoff, the water that flows off streets, buildings, parking lots, lawns and other surfaces is a serious problem for Minnesota lakes and rivers. Your community can make a significant impact on pollution coming from your streets and improve the health of your lakes, rivers and streams. To learn more, go to [www.freshwater.org](http://www.freshwater.org) and search for What is Polluting Our Lakes.

### What else can I do to fight phosphorus pollution?

Your street is a tributary to your local lake or river.

- Rake and sweep street curbs BEFORE spring rains wash debris into sewers and participate in your annual Community Clean-Up Day.
- Rake fall leaves before the first snowfall.
- Always mow away from the street.
- Sweep fertilizers off sidewalks and driveways.

Joining this effort will not only help prevent water pollution in your community today, but will help spread the word and model behavior to keep lakes and rivers clean for generations to come.

For more information contact the Freshwater Society at 952-471-9773 or [freshwater@freshwater.org](mailto:freshwater@freshwater.org).



# TIPS, TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY CLEAN-UPS

## Overview

Stormwater runoff is one of the most common causes of water pollution. Stormwater is rainwater or snowmelt that, instead of soaking into the ground, runs off of streets, lawns, farms, and construction and industrial sites and into local lakes, rivers and streams. Stormwater drain systems are designed to efficiently and quickly carry runoff water to a nearby water body that may then drain to other lakes, rivers and streams. Stormwater carries with it leaves, grass clippings, twigs, soil and other types of debris that contain phosphorus and other plant nutrients and create algae blooms and degrade water quality. Because the ground is frozen for a portion of the year, it is particularly important to prevent the transport of these nutrients from grass clippings and leaves in the late fall or early spring. Plants are unable to use the nutrients and it is very likely that a fall or spring rainstorm will carry these highly decomposed materials quickly over the land and into our lakes and rivers. And since most Minnesotans live within a short distance from a lake, river or stream, participating in a Community Clean-Up for Water Quality will help each community make its local water cleaner.



## The problem

In the spring and the fall, leaves and organic material end up on our streets, get ground up by cars, decay and are washed into storm drains. This contributes to the excess nutrients in water bodies, which degrade water quality by reducing the amount of oxygen available for fish and other aquatic species. Forty percent of Minnesota's lakes, rivers and streams have been degraded by runoff and other contaminants.

## The solution

Join or organize a Community Clean-up for Water Quality. This program has been successfully run in the Minnesota River Watershed since 2003 by the Friends of Minnesota Valley.

## Time commitment

It takes very little time to have a huge impact. It will take around 10–12 hours of organizing and distributing information prior to the Clean-Up Day, 3–4 hours on Clean-Up Day and a couple of hours more to celebrate your accomplishment!

## Who can conduct a Community Clean-Up?

The activity is not strenuous and most clean-ups can be performed by volunteers of all ages. The group can be either small or large; it just requires a commitment to improve water quality. Any type of group can do a clean-up: church groups, scout groups, civic organizations, students as part of service projects, environmental or conservation organizations and groups of neighbors.

## How will this help our lakes, rivers and streams?

Holding a Community Clean-Up in your community will foster a sense of working together, will educate people about water quality and will reinforce their commitment to a cleaner, stronger, community and instill a sense of pride. Keeping our water clean can seem like an overwhelming job and many people wonder if they can really make a difference. As part of your Clean-Up, you will be able to easily measure the results of your effort.

Make the commitment to conduct a Community Clean-Up for Water Quality and become part of a growing network of citizens working to improve the natural resources of our state.

## Decide on Your Level of Clean-Up

Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality can be conducted in a variety of ways depending on the number of volunteers and energy!



### LEVEL 1 (Tadpole)

- **Inform Residents** - Volunteers distribute door hangers to residents informing them of the pollution problem, providing tips on how they can prevent pollution all year long, and encouraging residents to clean-up their street and boulevard. Residents will be asked to report to your organization the number of bags they have filled and composted.
- **Public Place Clean-Up** - Pick a date for your group to conduct a curb and boulevard clean-up adjacent to public properties such as parks, schools and unattended land.



### LEVEL 2 (Fingerling)

- **Inform Residents** - Volunteers distribute door hangers, flyers, and place newspaper ads or inserts to encourage residents to clean their curbs and boulevards; then record the number of bags filled and either take them directly to the compost site or place them on the boulevard for the Pick-Up Day.
- **Pick-Up Day** - Your group organizes a Pick-Up Day to collect bags from the boulevard and take them to the compost site.

### LEVEL 3 (Turtle)

- **Inform Residents** - Volunteers distribute door hangers, flyers, and place newspaper ads or inserts to encourage residents to clean their curbs and boulevards; then record the number of bags filled and take them to the compost site or place them on the boulevard for the Pick-Up Day.
- **Pick-Up Day** - Your group organizes a Pick-Up Day to collect bags from the boulevard and take them to the composite site.
- **Public Place Clean-Up** - Your group conducts a curb and boulevard clean-up adjacent to public properties such as parks, schools and unattended land.



### LEVEL 4 (Muskie)

- **This is the big one!** Your group is so committed you do all of the above both spring and fall.
- A clean-up at any level will help to reduce the pollution in our lakes, rivers and streams. Asking residents to get involved increases the number of people who are preventing pollution and provides a broader education for the community on what individuals can do to prevent pollution all year long.

Once you have decided on a level, register your clean-up online at [www.freshwater.org](http://www.freshwater.org). Click on Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality and fill in the information. This will provide your residents with an online option to record their individual efforts and provide a database to calculate your pollution prevention efforts. We will also be able to assist you with questions and fill requests for items such as door hangers or other materials.

# BASIC STEPS FOR COMMUNITY CLEAN-UPS

## The Basic Steps

The following steps are provided for a Level 3 Clean-Up. You can use the steps below as general guidelines as you plan a Level 1, 2 3 or 4 clean-up.

### STEP 1. Select the area for clean-up

It may be your entire community or a small area within a community such as a neighborhood. This will be the area where you will distribute information, collect bags of debris, and clean up public places. It's helpful to choose an area with readily identifiable boundaries in the event you publicize

the area through newspapers or flyers. (i.e. Lincoln Park Neighborhood).

In addition to identifying public areas that will be cleaned up, you may also choose to encourage residents to clean up the curbs and driveways in front of their houses. Residents can

bag leaves and organic material from their curbs and either bring the bags to a compost site or have the organizing group pick them up during a set time on Clean-Up Day. Obtain a map of the area to assist in information distribution.

### STEP 2. Contact your community or city maintenance office

Your city public works department or city offices can help you with maps, and compost site hours. If they sweep streets, they will provide you the scheduled dates. Provide them with an informational fact sheet or brochure about the program from this toolkit.



You will want your city public works department to know that this is a pollution prevention project that supports the hard work its employees do to keep the streets clean and you would appreciate any help they can provide. However, their approval is not needed for you to conduct a clean-up.

Information to obtain:

- Map of the area designated for clean-up
- Compose site hours
- Street sweeping date(s)

### STEP 3. Choose a date and time

Weekends are popular for Community Clean-Ups. Choose a date at least one month in advance to allow time to fully prepare. Clean-Ups can be scheduled in the

fall or in the spring of the year. In the fall, you will want to schedule the date as early as possible prior to the first major snow storm, but after most leaves have fallen from the trees. In the spring, schedule it as soon as possible after the snow melts and before rainstorms wash the decaying leaves and soil from lawns, snow banks and gutters. Prior to picking a

APRIL 2014						
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			



day, check with your city to determine if and when street sweeping is conducted. You may want to schedule your clean-up prior to this time to keep a majority of the debris out of lakes, rivers and streams. However, scheduling it after street sweeping will clean up all remaining materials.

An alternative date should also be chosen in the event of inclement weather.

### STEP 4. Recruit volunteers

If your organization is sponsoring the Community Clean-Up, recruit members and complete the volunteer sign-up sheet (page 15). Also consider recruiting your friends, family and neighbors and perhaps work with another community group to recruit sufficient volunteers to help with publicizing the Clean-Up. This toolkit provides samples of flyers, brochures, and newsletter articles to help recruit volunteers.

Depending on the size of the clean-up area, you will need from 6–30 volunteers. Be sure to remind volunteers to bring gloves, rakes, shovels, brooms, and safety vests if possible, and to dress appropriately for the weather conditions. You will also want volunteers with pickup trucks or trailers to transport the bags to the compost site. Depending on your resources, you may also need volunteers to bring a box of yard waste bags.



### STEP 5. Engage civic or community leaders

Bring attention to your Community Clean-Up and increase media coverage by involving your civic leaders. Your mayor, city council members, commissioners or a legislators might like the opportunity to participate in the event or support the event through local media. Provide them with a copy of the informational fact sheet or brochure and let them know the date of your Community Clean-Up.

Your city council or mayor may be able to issue a proclamation for the Clean-Up Day (page 23).

### STEP 6. Publicize the Clean-Up

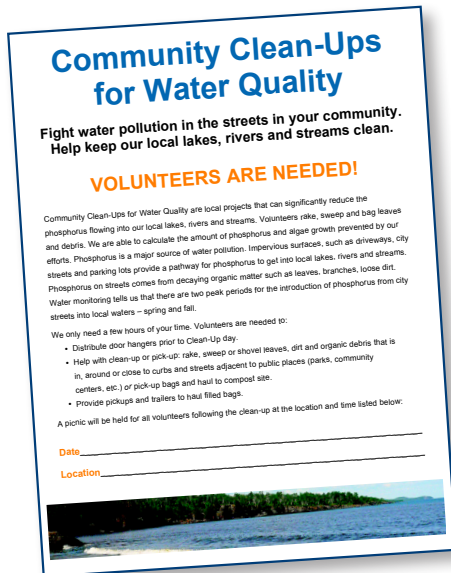
Approximately three weeks before is the ideal time to let community members know about the Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality program through an article in the local newspaper. An article will help inform community residents about the project and encourage them to participate by collecting leaves and debris in front of their houses. Invite a newspaper reporter to cover the event on your Clean-Up Day.



If it is community wide, ask the local paper to enclose a flyer or run an ad in the weekly newspaper one week prior (see flyer sample on page 14 and ad samples on pages 20-21). This flyer explains the program and asks residents to rake the curb, streets and boulevards in front of their homes, bag the debris and either take it to the compost site or leave it for your organization to pick up on the Clean-Up Day. It also encourages them to complete the card on the door hanger to provide credit

# BASIC STEPS FOR COMMUNITY CLEAN-UPS

for the work and to help us in measuring how much pollution they have prevented.



If you decide to distribute a door hanger/flyer by hand, rather than through the paper, place the flyer/door hanger in each resident's newspaper box or on the front door knob in the area covered by the Community Clean-Up.

Identify as many ways as possible to get the message out about your Community Clean-Up to benefit the entire community. This toolkit provides samples of materials you can use for:

- Newspapers
- Newsletters
- Radio/TV stations
- Utility bill stuffers



Don't forget:

- Church bulletins
- City newsletters/websites
- School newsletters/websites

Publicizing the Community Clean-Up does two things:

1. Informs residents of the who, what, why and when of the event.
2. Educates everyone about the cause of water pollution and what they can do to improve water quality in their lakes, rivers and streams.



## STEP 7. Seek sponsors

A great way to show your appreciation to volunteers is by holding a celebration with food after the clean-up. If you have your own resources, great! If not, look for a local grocery store or restaurant to donate food and drinks. Describe the program and tell them how it benefits the community and recognize them as a sponsor of the clean-up. Also, plan for a place to have the celebration and let volunteers know on the flyers. This could be the same place that you will meet as a group to begin the clean-up.

Designate a few people to prepare the food following the clean-up.

## STEP 8. Prepare for Clean-Up Day

One week before, volunteers will distribute door hangers to residents and flyers to public places in the participating area to let citizens know about the clean-up, how they can help, and why the project is being done. Templates of these materials are provided in this toolkit. Also,

- Reconfirm with your city maintenance office the compost site and hours of operation
- Enlist volunteers with pickup trucks or cars with trailers to pick up the bags
- Obtain maps of the areas to schedule local volunteer and support vehicles

- Secure needed materials (Levels 1,3,4):
  - Rakes, shovels, brooms, gloves (ask volunteers to bring from home)
  - Yard waste bags (plan on 30 bags per person) (3–4 hours)
- Safety vests (your city may have these available for use)



#### Weather Contingency Plan

Have a weather contingency plan in place. Compile a list of volunteer phone numbers and email addresses and plan to call or email them the night before or the morning of the event if it is postponed. Also, have a person at the meeting site in case other volunteers show up on the day of the clean-up, not aware that it was postponed.

## STEP 9. Clean-Up Day – HAVE FUN!

- **Gathering Site**  
Determine a site and time to have all volunteers meet on the morning of the clean-up such as a local park, community center or school.



- **Volunteer Check In**

Place a check-in station near the parking area to register all volunteers. Review all clean-up instructions; thank special guests, sponsors and volunteers.

- **Opening Remarks**

Briefly talk about the importance of the Community Clean-Up for Water Quality Program and the vital work all are doing to protect and restore our water resources.

Acknowledge and thank volunteers, sponsors, and city staff for their support and participation.

- **Support Vehicles**

Ensure you have support vehicles such as pickup trucks or cars with trailers to transport the debris.

- **Materials**

Materials needed for that day will be yard waste bags (35 gallons or larger), leaf rakes, shovels, brooms and gloves. Also have volunteers bring cameras to document your work.

- **Assignment of Groups**

Distribute a map of the area, if needed. Identify the areas for each support vehicle, group the volunteers in specific areas for collection. Designate a leader to manage each group of volunteers at the assigned area.

- **Recorder**

Have one volunteer at the compost or collection site to count and record the number of bags delivered by clean-up volunteers.



- **Empty Bags**

Most compost sites require you to empty the bags and take the empty bags for appropriate disposal, recycling or reuse.



# BASIC STEPS FOR COMMUNITY CLEAN-UPS

- **Separate Trash**

Separate any recyclable materials you may encounter (plastic bottles, etc.) and bring to a recycling center or make arrangements with your city for trash pickup.

- **Take Pictures**

Have cameras with each volunteer group (if possible) to take pictures of the activities and fun.



- **Prepare to Celebrate!**

Have food arranged for a picnic after the event. Arrange a time for all volunteers to return to either the meeting place or another area for the celebration.



## **STEP 10. Host Clean-Up Party**

Gather all volunteers and sponsors to celebrate a job well done! Have a picnic, cookout or lunch.

## **STEP 11. Publicize your success!**

Submit pictures and information about the clean-up success to your local paper, newsletters, city websites, etc. Sharing this information recognizes the hard work of the volunteers and educates the entire community about preventing water pollution (pages 27-28).

## **STEP 12. Schedule an Annual Clean-Up for Water Quality**

Now that you have successfully completed a clean-up, the program will grow with new volunteers each year. Announce the annual Community Clean-Up to all volunteers.

## **STEP 13. Report your success**

We want to hear about your project! Visit our website and report information about your Clean-Up. We are compiling information from around the state to show the collective impact of projects. Go to [www.freshwater.org](http://www.freshwater.org) and click on the link to Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality.

# SAMPLES AND TEMPLATES

The following publicity and informational materials are intended to give you examples for organizing a Community Clean-Up for Water Quality. You can use them to help plan and run a successful event, connect with partners, promote your project to the media and the public and manage volunteers effectively. If you have further questions, contact the Freshwater Society at 952-471-9773 or 888-471-9773, [freshwater@freshwater.org](mailto:freshwater@freshwater.org) or Friends of the Minnesota Valley at 952-881-9055, [info@friendsofmnvalley.org](mailto:info@friendsofmnvalley.org).

This toolkit was constructed to use the “Why Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality Are Important” (page 1) and Questions and Answers (pages 2-3) as additional handouts. You may copy these documents for distribution as needed.

## PRE-EVENT PUBLICITY

### Press Release

A sample press release is provided on page 13. A modifiable template is provided on the disk in your toolkit. You may use this press release or create your own. Distribute it to local newspapers, radio and television stations, newsletters, church bulletins, etc., approximately 2-3 weeks prior to your scheduled clean-up. If you are not holding a Pick-Up Day (Level 1), remove the sentences in brackets.

### Volunteer Recruitment Flyer

If you are recruiting volunteers outside of your organization you can use the volunteer flyer and place in community gathering locations, local businesses, churches, etc.

### Volunteer Sign-Up Sheet

Collect contact information for your volunteers.

### Sample Community Flyer (Level 1)

### Sample Community Flyer (Levels 2, 3, 4)

Distributing flyers around your community for bulletin boards in community gathering places such as grocery stores, local business, civic center,

churches, schools, etc. will be a visual reinforcement of the coming event. Sample flyers are provided on the disk and are able to be modified for your event.

### Newspaper Article (Level 1)

### Newspaper Article (Levels 2, 3, 4)

Your local newspaper can help get the message out about your Community Clean-Up for Water Quality. A sample newspaper article (pages 18-19) is provided for you to use as a guide in crafting an article for the newspaper or talking to a reporter. The who, what, why, how and when are needed. It is also helpful to have quotes from local sponsors, your organizer, program sponsors, the Freshwater Society or the Friends of the Minnesota Valley. You may use the quotes on the sample from the Freshwater Society or Friends of the Minnesota Valley for your article. This article can also be adapted for newsletters. Brainstorm a list of newsletters in your community and determine timeline and format for publication.

### Newspaper Ad (Level 1)

### Newspaper Ad (Levels 2, 3, 4)

Pages 20-21 provide a sample of newspaper ads to run 2 weeks prior to your scheduled clean-up. Talk to your local newspaper; ask if they would donate space to run the ad or if your organization has resources, ask for a reduction in ad cost. Ad sizes vary between newspapers so ask for the size, format and timeline information.

### Door Hanger/Flyer

Door hangers are a great way for getting information out to each household in your clean-up area. They also provide an opportunity to personally ask residents to participate and are a handy reference for actions they can do all year long to reduce phosphorus pollution. A cut-off postcard is provided to encourage residents to record the number of bags they collect. The door hangers are provided by the Freshwater Society and space is provided to either write in your event information or create a

## SAMPLES AND TEMPLATES

label to place on the hanger. You will also want to put a return mailing label for your organization on the postcard. The door hanger/flyer can either be put on the front door or in the newspaper box at each home in the area.

### Proclamation

Your city council and/or mayor are important allies in Community Clean-Up projects. They can help publicize a successful event and provide official support. One way to demonstrate their support is by issuing a Proclamation. Frequently they request the organization to submit draft language for a Proclamation. Page 23 provides a sample Proclamation. A template is also provided on the disk for customization. Contact your city council/mayor well in advance of your clean-up day in order to provide sufficient time for processing the Proclamation. Provide your city officials with a brochure and make the DVD available for viewing.

### Brochure

The Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality brochure has many uses. You can provide this to your volunteers, sponsors, city or community leaders, publicity contacts, etc. Page 24 shows a sample of the brochure and a brochure template is on the disk allowing you to modify it with your organization name and contact information or print “as is” for general information.

### Utility Bill Stuffer

Many utility providers will allow organizations to submit an insert or print information on a monthly utility bill. In the sample provided on page 25, a general reminder on preventing pollution has been printed on a local utility bill. Contact your local utility company to determine their policy and requirements for an insert. Frequently these are scheduled months in advance so keep this in mind if you would like to publicize the date of the clean-up. A general reminder in the spring or

fall about preventing pollution encourages good stewardship.

## POST-EVENT PUBLICITY

### Letter to the Editor

One way to reinforce the importance of pollution prevention throughout the year is sending a letter to the editor such as the sample provided on page 26.

### Post-Event Newspaper Articles

Let everyone know about your success! Hopefully your local newspaper accepted your invitation to cover your clean-up, but if they were not able to, follow-up by submitting a story and pictures. A newspaper article recognizes the efforts of local residents, volunteers and your organization as well as increases pollution awareness to other community members and sets the stage for your annual clean-ups.

## INFORMATIONAL VIDEO

This toolkit contains a video that briefly describes the programs, its importance and community benefits. Use the DVD to recruit volunteers, inform civic leaders and sponsors and others who are interested in the project. The DVD also contains templates for the above documents. The video is also available at [www.freshwater.org](http://www.freshwater.org). Follow the links to the Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality Program.



- SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE -

## PRESS RELEASE

\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*

### **Community Clean-Up for Water Quality Planned for April 10**

**April 10, 2013**

**CONTACT: Sam Hagen, 218-763-XXXX**

One of the best ways to reduce pollution in our lakes, rivers and streams caused by excess phosphorus, sediment and nutrients, is to remove decaying organic matter (leaves, sand, etc.) from city streets and parking lots before it has a chance to wash down city storm sewers. Citizens in the community of Dodger will have the opportunity to clean up their communities this spring and help reduce pollutants in local water bodies. Excess phosphorus feeds the growth of algae that degrades water quality and diminishes oxygen for fish and native plants.

Citizens are being asked to clean up the stretch of street and boulevard in front of their homes, bag the debris, record the bags and take them to the compost site. [or simply leave curbside for pick up by volunteers on the Pick-Up Day scheduled.]

[Please note, this is not a garbage or unwanted items pickup; if left, those items will not be picked up. It is strictly for leaves and dirt that are in or near the curb area.]

Beginning this week, door hangers and flyers will be distributed in participating communities to let residents know how they can help and explain more about how and why the project is being done. Volunteers are needed for distribution of door hangers prior to the event. Call 218-763-XXXX to volunteer.

This program is sponsored by United Methodist Church with support from Hardware Hank and Al's Grocery.

*Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality is a statewide program of the Freshwater Society and Friends of the Minnesota Valley.*

Note: If you are not conducting a residential pickup, omit the sentences in brackets [ ].

# Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality

**Fight water pollution in the streets in your community.  
Help keep our local lakes, rivers and streams clean.**

## **VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!**

Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality are local projects that can significantly reduce the phosphorus flowing into our local lakes, rivers and streams. Volunteers rake, sweep and bag leaves and debris. Phosphorus is a major source of water pollution. Impervious surfaces, such as driveways, city streets and parking lots provide a pathway for phosphorus to get into local lakes, rivers and streams. Phosphorus on streets comes from decaying organic matter such as leaves, branches, loose dirt. Water monitoring tells us that there are two peak periods for the introduction of phosphorus from city streets into local waters – spring and fall.

We only need a few hours of your time. Volunteers are needed to:

- Distribute door hangers prior to Clean-Up day.
- Help with clean-up or pick-up: rake, sweep or shovel leaves, dirt and organic debris that is in, around or close to curbs and streets adjacent to public places (parks, community centers, etc.) or pick-up bags and haul to compost site.
- Provide pickups and trailers to haul filled bags.

A picnic will be held for all volunteers following the clean-up at the location and time listed below:

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location** \_\_\_\_\_



[illegible]



LEVEL 1 (NO RESIDENTIAL PICKUP)

# Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality



## LEARN MORE

Learn about the pollution of surface waters by excess phosphorus and other contaminants.

Go to [www.freshwater.org](http://www.freshwater.org)

and search for

**What is polluting our lakes?**

## Fight water pollution in the streets near your home.

Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality are local projects that can significantly reduce the phosphorus flowing into our local lakes, rivers and streams, by removing leaves and yard debris from city streets.

**What:** Citizens needed to rake, sweep or shovel leaves, dirt and organic debris that is in, around or close to curbs and streets around your house. Bag it, record the number of bags, then take them to the compost site by the Community Clean-Up Day listed below.

**Why:** Phosphorus is a major source of water pollution. Impervious surfaces, such as driveways, city streets and parking lots provide a pathway for phosphorus to get into local lakes, rivers and streams. Phosphorus on streets comes from decaying organic matter such as

leaves, branches and loose dirt. Water monitoring tells us that there are two peak periods for the introduction of phosphorus from city streets into local waters—spring and fall.

### **Volunteers are needed to:**

- distribute door hangers and reporting cards prior to Clean-Up Day
- help with clean up during the event and
- provide pickups and trailers to help crew.



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsors: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

To volunteer or for more information, call \_\_\_\_\_

LEVELS 2,3,4 (RESIDENTIAL PICK-UP DAY)

# Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality



## LEARN MORE

Learn about the pollution of surface waters by excess phosphorus and other contaminants.

Go to [www.freshwater.org](http://www.freshwater.org)

and search for

What is polluting our lakes?

## Fight water pollution in the streets near your home.

Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality are local projects that can significantly reduce the phosphorus flowing into our local lakes, rivers and streams, by removing leaves and yard debris from city streets.

**What:** Rake, sweep or shovel leaves, dirt and organic debris that is in, around or close to curbs and streets. Bag it, record the number of bags, then take them to the compost site by the Community Clean-Up Day listed below or simply leave near the curb for pick up.

**Why:** Phosphorus is a major source of water pollution. Impervious surfaces, such as driveways, city streets and parking lots provide a pathway for phosphorus to get into local lakes, rivers and streams. Phosphorus on streets comes from decaying organic matter such as leaves,

branches and loose dirt. Water monitoring tells us that there are two peak periods for the introduction of phosphorus from city streets into local waters—spring and fall.

### Volunteers are needed to:

- distribute door hangers and reporting cards prior to Clean-Up Day
- pick up bags and help with clean up during the event and
- provide pickups and trailers to help crew.



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsors: \_\_\_\_\_

Bags on boulevard by: \_\_\_\_\_

To volunteer or for more information, call \_\_\_\_\_

## Community clean-up day planned here April 12

To improve water quality in area lakes and streams, leaves and yard debris from streets and boulevards will be cleaned up during a Community Clean-Up for Water Quality Day planned for (Town) on (Day/Date).

**Citizens are asked to rake, sweep and bag the street and boulevard in front of their house, record the number of filled bags and take them to the compost site.**

Organizers of the community clean-up are also planning to rake, sweep or shovel leaves, dirt and organic debris on city streets and boulevards adjacent to public places, such as parks, community centers, etc. The debris will be bagged and hauled to the compost site.

Phosphorus is a major source of water pollution according to Cherie Wagner, Freshwater Society.

She explained that city streets and parking lots provide a pathway for phosphorus to get into the water. Phosphorus on streets comes from decaying organic matter such as leaves, branches and loose dirt.

According to Scott Sparlin, Friends of the Minnesota Valley, water monitoring tells us that spring and fall are the peak periods for the introduction of phosphorus from city streets into local waters.

If you are interested in volunteering or want more information, call: XXX-XXX-XXXX or XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Sponsors and coordinators of this clean-up project include Lake Forever Committee, Clean River Assessment, Smith Meat Market and Jerry's Home Foods.

Program support from the Freshwater Society and Friends of the Minnesota Valley.



## Community clean-up day planned here April 12

To improve water quality in area lakes and streams, leaves and yard debris from streets and boulevards will be cleaned up during a Community Clean-Up for Water Quality Day planned for (Town) on (Day/Date).

**Citizens are asked to rake, sweep and bag the street and boulevard in front of their house, record the number of filled bags and take them to the compost site or leave on the boulevard April 12 by 9:00 a.m. for pick-up by volunteers.**

Organizers of the community clean-up are also planning to rake, sweep or shovel leaves, dirt and organic debris on city streets and boulevards adjacent to public places, such as parks, community centers, etc. The debris will be bagged and hauled to the compost site.

Phosphorus is a major source of

water pollution according to Cherie Wagner, Freshwater Society. She explained that city streets and parking lots provide a pathway for phosphorus to get into the water. Phosphorus on streets comes from decaying organic matter such as leaves, branches and loose dirt.

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If you are interested in volunteering or want more information, call: XXX-XXX-XXXX or XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Sponsors and coordinators of this clean-up project include Lake Forever Committee, Clean River Assessment, Smith Meat Market and Jerry's Home Foods.

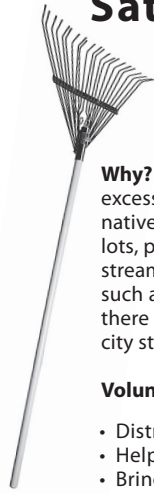
Program support from the Freshwater Society and Friends of the Minnesota Valley.

# ANYTOWN

## Community Clean-Up Day for Water Quality

***Fight Water Pollution Near Your Home***

**Sat., April 12 • 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**



**What?** Citizens to rake, sweep or shovel leaves, dirt and organic debris around or close to curbs and streets by their home. Bag it, record the number of filled bags and take them to the compost site.

**Why?** Phosphorus is a major source of water pollution that causes excessive growth of algae and depletes oxygen needed for fish and native plants. Impervious surfaces, such as city streets and parking lots, provide a pathway for phosphorus to get to local lakes, rivers and streams. Phosphorus on streets comes from decaying organic matter such as leaves, branches and loose dirt. Water monitoring tells us that there are two peak periods for the introduction of phosphorus from city streets into local waters—spring and fall.

**Volunteers needed to:**

- Distribute door hangers prior to April 12
- Help clean-up public places on April 12
- Bring pickups and trailers to assist crew

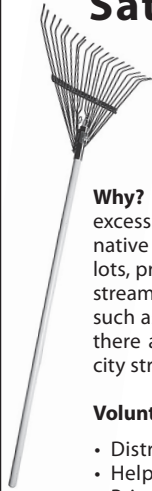
**To volunteer call: 507-359-XXXX or 507-237-XXXX**

**Project Sponsors:** Lake Ida Committee, Al's Meat Market and Jerry's Home Quality Foods.

*Program support from Freshwater Society with Friends of the Minnesota Valley.*

# ANYTOWN

## Community Clean-Up Day for Water Quality *Fight Water Pollution Near Your Home* **Sat., April 12 • 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**



**Needed?** Citizens to rake, sweep or shovel leaves, dirt and organic debris around or close to curbs and streets by their home. Bag it, record the number of filled bags and take them to the compost site or leave by your curb by 9:00 a.m. for pick up on April 12.

**Why?** Phosphorus is a major source of water pollution that causes excessive growth of algae and depletes oxygen needed for fish and native plants. Impervious surfaces, such as city streets and parking lots, provide a pathway for phosphorus to get to local lakes, rivers and streams. Phosphorus on streets comes from decaying organic matter such as leaves, branches and loose dirt. Water monitoring tells us that there are two peak periods for the introduction of phosphorus from city streets into local waters – spring and fall.

**Volunteers needed to:**

- Distribute door hangers prior to April 12
- Help clean-up public places on April 12
- Bring pickups and trailers to assist crew

**To volunteer call:** 507-359-XXXX or 507-237-XXXX


**Project Sponsors:** Lake Ida Committee, Al's Meat Market and Jerry's Home Quality Foods.

*Program support from Freshwater Society with Friends of the Minnesota Valley.*



- SAMPLE DOOR HANGER -

(front)



## Fight Water Pollution in the Streets Near Your Home

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

TO VOLUNTEER CALL \_\_\_\_\_

SPONSORED BY \_\_\_\_\_

**Please help—You can do your part—it's easy.**

**HOW:** Rake/sweep decaying leaves, branches and dirt from the curbs, streets and boulevards in front of your home.

**WHEN:** Immediately after the leaves fall, before the street sweeper comes and before rain washes it away into your lake, river or stream.

**WHY:** Leaves and other organic materials contain phosphorus that causes excessive algae growth and oxygen depletion. By raking and bagging leaves and debris in and near our streets, we can reduce the phosphorus pollution in our lakes, rivers and streams.

**WHAT TO DO:** Bag it, and take it to the compost site or save them for a Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality pickup day if an event is planned for your city.

Please mail this card back to us so we can give you credit for your work. Please tell us how many bags of debris you collected:

bags of debris

You can also enter this information online at [www.freshwater.org](http://www.freshwater.org) Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality. Find your community and record your information.

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Email Address

(back)

### Want to do more?

Here's what you can do to reduce phosphorus pollution in your neighborhood year-round:

- Remember that your street is a tributary to your local lake or river. It is unlawful to put anything on the street that you cannot put in the water.
- Rake and sweep street curbs BEFORE spring rains wash debris into sewers.
- Growing cities don't always have the budget, staff, or equipment to collect street debris in a timely manner. Keep organic debris (leaves, grass, branches, dirt) off the street in front of your house. Sweep up after wind storms.
- Always mow away from the street.
- Scoop the poop! Pet waste adds nutrients and bacteria to our waters.
- Sweep fertilizers off sidewalks and driveways and dispose of properly.
- Rake fall leaves before rainfall or before the first snowfall.
- Use sand or rock grit on icy sidewalks in winter instead of salt which enhances phosphorus pollution problems in lakes.

Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality

SPONSORING ORGANIZATION'S MAILING LABEL

please affix stamp

# Proclamation

Whereas, Lake Titlow and the Rush River are important natural resources to the City of Gaylord; and

Whereas, Gaylord storm water affects those important local resources; and

Whereas, people can reduce pollution to those surface water resources by holding a Community Clean-Up for Water Quality Day to remove leaves and other organic debris from in and near the streets and parking lots of Gaylord; and

Whereas, citizens will find out how much phosphorus they prevent from entering storm drains; and

Now Therefore, we the City Council and Mayor do proclaim Saturday, April 12, 2013 as:

**Gaylord Community Clean-up for Water Quality Day**

(outside)

### How will this help our lakes, rivers and streams?

Stormwater runoff, the water that runs off of streets, buildings, parking lots, lawns and other surfaces is a serious problem for Minnesota lakes and rivers. Grass clippings, leaves and soil that wash down storm sewers to rivers and lakes contain phosphorus and nitrogen. These nutrients become food for plants and animals in the water. We are seriously over-feeding our waters. Too much phosphorus grows too much algae, using up oxygen in lakes and streams and making waters green and slimy. Nitrogen also contributes to algae growth, and is a major cause of the Dead Zone in the Gulf of Mexico. To learn more, go to [www.freshwater.org](http://www.freshwater.org) and search for What is Polluting Our Lakes.



PHOTO: ANOMA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

### What else can I do?

Your street is a tributary to your local lake or river.

- ◆ Rake and sweep street curbs BEFORE spring rains wash debris into sewers, by participating in your annual Community Clean-Up Day.
- ◆ Rake fall leaves before rainfall or before the first snowfall.
- ◆ Always mow away from the street.
- ◆ Sweep fertilizers off sidewalks and driveways.

Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality are conducted by people just like you, your neighbors and friends. Join the effort. Make this the year you will take action to improve our lakes and rivers.



For more information contact:

952-471-9773  
888-471-9773  
[freshwater@freshwater.org](mailto:freshwater@freshwater.org)



PRINTED WITH SOY-BASED INK ON PAPER FROM SUSTAINABLY GROWN FORESTS.

### Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality

Reduce polluted runoff in the streets near your home

A PARTNERSHIP OF  
FRESHWATER SOCIETY and  
FRIENDS OF THE MINNESOTA VALLEY

## Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality

Leaves and yard debris from city streets. Any community group can participate – scout troops, a school class, a church group, a service organization or a group of neighbors. Volunteers rake and bag leaves, dirt and debris blocking storm drain grates. The organic material can then be composted away from area waters.

Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality have been sponsored for years by Friends of the Minnesota Valley. The Freshwater Society is working with the Friends to take the campaign statewide.



### Why are Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality important?

We are overfeeding our waters!

Storm drains flow into lakes and rivers. Rain and melting snow carry leaves, yard debris, and sand from streets into those waters. As the organic matter decays, it acts like food for algae in the water. Leaves and grass are a natural part of lake and river ecosystems. The problem is, storm sewers simply carry too much food to our lakes and rivers, causing too much algae to grow, choking out other plants and animals. By cleaning up leaves in the spring or fall, volunteers can reduce pollution and protect healthy waters.

### How can I help?

Organize a group of volunteers to clean curbs, gutters, boulevards and storm drain grates in your community and coordinate the disposal and composting of leaves and other organic material. You may want to talk with city officials and local media to publicize the clean-up to attract more volunteers. For a toolkit on planning and conducting a clean-up, contact the Freshwater Society at 952-471-9773 or [freshwater@freshwater.org](mailto:freshwater@freshwater.org).



### What happens on the day of the clean-up?

Your group will clean leaves, branches and trash from the curbs, gutters, boulevards and storm drain grates in the area you select and bag the debris. All you need are gloves, rakes, brooms, shovels and bags.

If you want to make a bigger impact, you can also encourage others in your community to rake, sweep, and bag leaves and debris from the curbs, gutters and boulevards in front of their homes. On clean-up day, the group collects the bags and takes them to a compost site.

### Doesn't street sweeping pick up all the leaves and trash?

If your city conducts street sweepings, many streets may not be swept by city crews until after the first spring rain. Fall clean-ups should be scheduled to gather leaves before snow falls, and leaves begin to decay. You may want to contact your city to learn about the city's street sweeping schedule, and schedule your cleanups before the trucks sweep, to supplement what your city is doing.

(inside)



- SAMPLE UTILITY BILL STUFFER -

Keep This Portion For Your Records

ACCOUNT NUMBER	READING PERIOD	TOTAL DUE	DUE DATE
00098296 - 302700003	12/26/2008 TO 03/23/2009	\$93.14	05/20/2009

SERVICE ADDRESS: 170 128TH AVE N W

STATEMENT DATE: 04/27/2009

METER READINGS				
Meter #	Read Date	Prev. Read	Pres. Read	Usage
47900225	03/23/2009	15141	15281	140
Total Water Consumption:				140
Consumption Measured in HUNDREDS OF GALLONS				

GENERATE CLEANER WATER FOR YOU,  
YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR COMMUNITY  
POLLUTION FROM CITY STREET  
RAINWATER RUNOFF DEGRADES OUR  
LAKES, RIVERS AND STREAMS. YOU CAN  
HELP PREVENT POLLUTION IN FRONT  
OF YOUR HOUSE BY KEEPING LEAVES,  
GRASS, DIRT AND GARBAGE OFF THE  
STREETS AND CURBS ALL YEAR ROUND.  
REMEMBER YOUR STREET IS A TRIBUTARY  
TO A LOCAL RIVER. HELP KEEP OUR  
RIVERS, STREAMS AND LAKES CLEAN.

REMIT TO: CITY OF COON RAPIDS  
11155 ROBINSON DR  
COON RAPIDS, MN 55433-3761

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE, CONTACT: 763-767-6438

ACCOUNT SUMMARY	
BILLING	97.07
PAYMENT - THANK YOU	97.07CR
<b>BALANCE FORWARD:</b>	<b>0.00</b>
MN STATE TESTING FEE	1.59
SERVICE CHARGE	7.35
WATER	20.30
SEWER	54.00
STORM DRAINAGE	9.90
<b>TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES:</b>	<b>93.14</b>
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT DUE:</b>	<b>93.14</b>
<b>A 10% PENALTY IS APPLIED IF PAYMENT IS NOT RECEIVED ON OR BEFORE THE 20TH OF THE MONTH IN WHICH IT IS DUE.</b>	
MESSAGES	
EFFECTIVE 4-1-2009, PAST DUE NOTICES ARE NO LONGER BEING GENERATED ON CITY OF COON RAPIDS UTILITY ACCOUNTS. For Sewer back-up problems call the city first! 763-767-6462 7:00 to 3:30 Monday - Friday. After hours & holidays, call 763-427-1212.	

## LAFAYETTE-NICOLLET LEDGER

July 31, 2008, Page 2

# Letter to the Editor

## Continue to keep the streets and gutters clean

To The Editor:

This spring I learned that grass clippings and leaves in our street gutters are detrimental to our ecology when they are washed by rain into our storm sewers. In turn, the water carries phosphorus and goes into the county ditches and then into our lakes and rivers where it produces algae. Ultimately, algae takes oxygen from the water as it decays, and the water body does not support the entire food chain.

The cities of Gaylord and Henderson brought this to the attention of

Lafayette

their residents and they each set aside a day to clean the streets as did the "Join Hands" group in Lafayette June 30. Let's continue to keep the streets and gutters in our community clean of grass clippings and leaves to ensure a healthy environment for us and for generations to come. Remember to mow away from the curb and clean up any grass that goes into the gutter. And in the same vein, remember to buy biodegradable cleaning products as well. They are available in super markets and in health food stores. A healthy environment means healthy people.

Lafayette Citizen







Freshwater Society  
500 Shadywood Road  
Excelsior, Minnesota 55331  
952-471-9773 | 888-471-9773  
[www.freshwater.org](http://www.freshwater.org)  
[freshwater@freshwater.org](mailto:freshwater@freshwater.org)



Friends of the Minnesota Valley  
P.O. Box 20697  
Bloomington, Minnesota 55420  
952-881-9055  
[www.friendsofmnvalley.org](http://www.friendsofmnvalley.org)  
[info@friendsofmnvalley.org](mailto:info@friendsofmnvalley.org)