

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 and search for *What is Polluting Our Lakes*.



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.



Dedicated to educating and inspiring people to value, conserve and protect water resources.



The River. The Land. The Future.

www.friendsofminnvalley.org

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Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality

Reduce polluted runoff in the streets near your home



What are Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality?

Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality are local projects that reduce polluted runoff flowing into lakes and rivers by cleaning up 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.



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.