Radio Spot #2 – June 2015 – Runoff Reduction: Making Rice Lake a Nicer Lake

What is Storm Water Runoff?

Water from rain or melting snow that does not soak into the ground or evaporate is called storm water. When it flows from rooftops, across roads, parking lots, driveways and other hard surfaces, and over bare soil and sloped lawns, it is called storm water runoff. Storm water runoff eventually finds its way into our waterways via storm drains and ditches that empty directly into local streams, rivers, and lakes. Storm water runoff volumes are greater in cities, villages, and other developed areas because water can't soak through the pavement, rooftops, and concrete.

Storm Water Runoff Illustration (http://www2.erie.gov/environment/index.php?q=how-can-you-prevent-stormwater-pollution)

What is Storm Water Pollution?

Storm water runoff conveys more than just water to streams, rivers, and lakes. Up to half of all pollutants in our waters come not from factories or wastewater treatment plants, but from many diffuse sources resulting from our own everyday activities. Storm water runoff carries dirt, grease, trash and more from roads, parking lots and other hard surfaces. Storm water also carries excess nutrients, like phosphorus, which turns our lakes and streams green and smelly and harms fish. Dog waste left on the ground, chemicals sprayed on your lawn, or mowed grass clippings can get washed into the nearest waterways by the next rain. Pet waste, pesticides, and other pollutants in your yard may not seem like they could have a large effect on local streams and lakes, but our waterways receive storm water from thousands of

backyards. What we do in our own yards and our own communities can make all the difference to the quality of our lakes and streams.

What are Runoff Reduction Projects?

Reducing the amount of storm water runoff coming from the land and into our lakes, rivers, and streams can reduce the amount of pollution fouling the waters. Diverting direct runoff from rooftops, driveways, and other hard surfaces into areas where that water can slowly soak into the ground instead of washing down the storm water drain is a practice that many can implement. Installing rain gardens, rock infiltration areas, and native planting that have a much greater capacity to soak up extra water can do a lot to reduce storm water pollution. Picking up pet waste and bagging and/or mulching lawn clippings and leaf litter instead of blowing it into the streets will further reduce storm water pollution.

If you live on the shores of a lake, river, or stream, shoreland improvement or restoration projects could be installed. These projects help to filter pollutants from the storm water before it enters the lake. Erosion control practices around docks and pathways to the lake can be installed to reduce the amount of dirt and sediment washed into the lake. Rain gardens, rain water diversion practices, pervious pavers, infiltration sites, and many other best management practices can be installed just about anywhere.

How can the Rice Lake – Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District help you?

The Lake District has a program that supports the efforts of property owners to reduce storm water runoff coming from their property. The Lake District contracts with a local shoreland, native plant, rain garden, and runoff reduction expert to provide free walk-throughs of your property to help you determine what can be done. Planning of small-scale projects can be done by this person as well. Large-scale projects that may require riprap, excavation, or major renovation cannot be done by this person.

If you have had a walk-through and determined a project to be done, or have a project planned by someone else that will reduce stormwater runoff to the lake or river, the Lake District can provide up to $500 in cost-sharing to help you implement that project. This program is open to any property owner within the boundaries of the Lake District. This includes the entire City of Rice Lake and most of the Town of Rice Lake. You do not have to own property on the lake, as this program is for all constituents, not just those living on the lake.

If you would like to schedule a free walk-through of your property contact one of the following Rice Lake – Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District representatives for more information:

Mike Cragg	Don Clemens	Rod Olson
715-205-0914	715-234-8375	715-234-1372
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Things You Can Do To Reduce Stormwater Runoff Pollution
(http://www.rockdalecounty.org/main.cfm?id=2767)

1. Educate your friends and family about stormwater topics and downstream pollution.
2. Put litter in its place, not on the ground!
3. Recycle your car batteries, used motor oil, used oil filters, and vehicle fluids properly.
4. Compost your yard waste.
5. Use fertilizers and pesticides sparingly.
6. Sweep extra fertilizer, grass clippings and dirt on your driveway or road back onto your lawn.
7. Reduce, reuse and recycle the amount of cleaning and maintenance chemicals used.
8. Dispose of household hazardous wastes only at designated locations.
9. Pick up after your pet and dispose of waste properly.
10. Complete regular vehicle maintenance and inspect for leaks frequently. If found, repair immediately.
11. If you wash your vehicle at home, do so on the lawn rather than on pavement.
12. Have your septic tank pumped and septic system inspected regularly.
13. Never drain your pool water into a storm drain system, ditch, lake, river, creek, stream or wetland.
14. Install a rain garden or rain barrel on your property.
15. Never dump or pour any motor oil, vehicle fluids, chemicals, pet waste, trash, dirty or soapy water, pool water, leaves, grass clippings, yard waste, fertilizers, pesticides or anything else down a storm drain or in a drainage ditch!

Remember, anything that enters a storm sewer system or drainage ditch is released untreated into bodies of water used for swimming, fishing and drinking. Only rain should go down a storm drain!

Additional Resources:
http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/gardens/nativeplants/index.html
http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/stormwater/raingarden/
http://www.popularmechanics.com/home/lawn-garden/how-to/a7661/5-ways-to-stop-runoff-from-ruining-your-lawn/
http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Documents/resources/healthylakes/RunoffGuide.pdf
http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Documents/resources/healthylakes/RockInfiltration-HealthyLakesFactSheetSeries.pdf
http://amerywisconsin.org/?112380
http://www.wikihow.com/Reduce-Stormwater-Runoff-at-Your-Home
http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-046/426-046-PDF.pdf
http://www2.erie.gov/environment/index.php?q=how-can-you-prevent-stormwater-pollution
http://www.rockdalecounty.org/main.cfm?id=2767
http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/living-green/living-green-citizen/yard-and-garden/capturing-rainwater-and-preventing-runoff.html
http://naturalresources.uwex.edu/rain2rivers/