

# Green Green Grass

Did you know that you can protect water quality while caring for your lawn? Residential lawns can be a significant source of nonpoint source pollution if cared for incorrectly when excess pesticides or fertilizers run off into nearby streams.

Here are some tips to care for your lawn naturally and protect our precious water.

## Fertilizing

- Substitute natural compost for prepared fertilizers. A soil test can tell you exactly which nutrients your lawn lacks.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn to provide nitrogen.
- If you do choose to apply a fertilizer, read the directions carefully and apply the recommended amount.

## Pesticides

- Minimize pesticide use by planting native plants that are more resistant to area bugs. In addition, native plants are often more drought resistant and need less fertilizers.
- When applying pesticides, make sure you only apply the least amount needed, and not before a heavy rain, when it will run off.

## Mowing

- Set your mower blade 2-3 inches high. Longer blades of grass help control weeds and conserve water naturally
- Keep mower blades sharp so they don't tear the grass and make it vulnerable to disease.



## Watering

- Water in the early morning hours to prevent water loss from evaporation.
- Water slowly, allowing water to be properly absorbed. For the most efficient watering, use a soaker hose or drip irrigation system.
- Watering once a week for several hours is the best method for a healthy lawn.

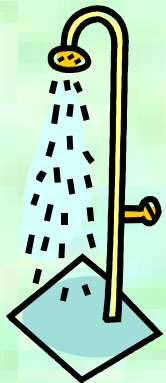
## Water Conservation



Conserving water actually helps with pollution issues. Water is not created; it is recycled. If each household in the Upper Etowah watershed reduces their water consumption by just a little bit, then less water will be taken from the rivers, streams and lakes. Adequate water flow protects habitat and ensures all of us will have enough water to use.

So, how can you reduce the water used in your house?

- ◆ Try to limit showers to 5 minutes.
- ◆ Teach your children to turn off the spigot while brushing their teeth (or, listen to your children when they try to teach you!).
- ◆ Consider installing a rainbarrel under your downspouts. This collects the water running off of your roof. Then you can use it to water your lawn or garden. Some rainbarrels come with drip irrigation systems that can be buried under a landscaped area.
- ◆ Sweep your driveway off rather than using a hose to wash off debris.
- ◆ Frequently check your plumbing system and any outdoor irrigation system for leaks. A leaking toilet wastes lots of water and money!
- ◆ Run dishwashers and washing machines only when fully loaded.
- ◆



## You and Your Car

Your car can be a significant source of non-point source pollution. Think about it. Many of the impervious surfaces that contribute to water pollution problems support your car – roads, driveways, parking lots. And if your car is leaking fluids, those fluids cannot filter through those hard surfaces and they simply get washed into streams, rivers or stormwater systems.

So, if you can't buy a horse and "hoof it," here are some solutions to reducing runoff pollution from your car:

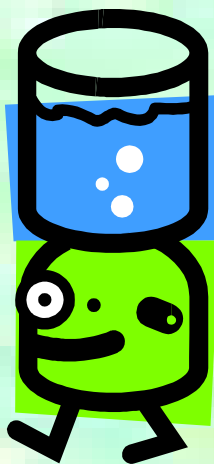
- ◆ Check your car frequently for fluid leaks, such as oil, antifreeze, etc. Have those leaks repaired quickly.
- ◆ If you have a spill or a leak in your driveway, use kitty litter to absorb it, rather than using a hose to wash it away. Washing it away simply washes into the water system.
- ◆ Recycle your used oil at local centers.
- ◆ Use a commercial car wash to clean your car; they recycle their water.
- ◆ If you must wash your car at home, use biodegradable soap and park your car on grass or gravel when washing. Leaving it on your driveway allows the detergents to get washed into the stormwater system. Washing on grass or gravel allows the water filter through the soils, breaking down the detergent naturally.

## We all Need Clean Water!

Pollution is the greatest threat to our clean water. That's the water we use to drink, shower, and fill our kids wading pool. Most of the pollution comes from ... us and our daily activities.

This pamphlet will list some of the sources of nonpoint source pollution and ways everyday citizens can reduce pollution.

### Clean Water Depends on YOU!



## The Scoop on Poop



We all do it. Dogs, cows, humans – we all produce poop.

And while it is a natural process, if that waste gets into our water, the effects can be detrimental. Several streams in the Etowah Watershed are listed on the Georgia List of Impaired Streams because they have too much fecal coliform bacteria, which comes from animal and human fecal waste. Fecal matter in the waterways can make humans sick.

How does it get into the water? Mostly, when septic systems leak or sewage systems overflow. Animals, both farm animals and domestic pets, also contribute. When septic systems fail or sewage lines break, the stuff they were designed to catch leaks out, either soaking into the ground water or bubbling up in a lawn and overflowing to a nearby stream and/or stormwater system.

So, what can everyday citizens do? Following are some suggestions how you can reduce the amount of fecal waste getting into our beautiful waterways:

- ◆ Clean up pet waste in your yard.
- ◆ Have your septic tank pumped out every 3-5 years and fix leaks immediately.
- ◆ Report any sewage leaks immediately.



Finally ...

Your greatest tool against pollution is your VOICE. Speak up when you see pollution. Get involved with local politics and check to see if your local government is passing and enforcing ordinances that reduce nonpoint source pollution.

**Together, we can all be the  
Solution to Pollution!**

For more information on reducing pollution, visit these websites:

[www.watersmart.net](http://www.watersmart.net)

[www.epa.gov/region4/water/nps](http://www.epa.gov/region4/water/nps)

[www.global-pollution.com](http://www.global-pollution.com)

[www.cleanwatercampaign.com](http://www.cleanwatercampaign.com)

To Contact the Upper Etowah River Alliance,  
visit [www.etowahriver.org](http://www.etowahriver.org)

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# Pollution



# Solutions