

You Can Curb Stormwater Pollution By Starting In Your Own Backyard

By Thomas Petrucci, Township Manager, Plainfield Township

Stormwater, rain that runs off hard surfaces and eventually into local waterways, is a major and fast growing source of pollution that affects every watershed.

This runoff may carry sediment, nutrients from lawns, waste from farms and pets, oil and litter from streets, and other contaminants into streams or storm drains. To cover the costs of managing stormwater's impact on the environment, some local governments have recently established programs that impose fees on property owners, who play a crucial role in limiting water pollution right in their own yards.

"When you add up the combined efforts of thousands of individual homeowners, the cumulative improvement on stormwater runoff and water quality can be quite substantial," says Al Todd, Executive Director of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, "but it can be hard to find the right information to get started."

The following lawn and garden tips will help property owners partner with their community to manage stormwater and battle water pollution.

Getting a start in your own back yard

A "stormwater-friendly" lawn is one that can absorb rainwater and does not harm local streams due to the over-application of chemicals. Likewise, a "stormwater-friendly" garden is one that uses organic compost as fertilizer to amend soil and minimizes or eliminates the use of chemicals.

Reducing chemical applications and encouraging infiltration will help stabilize local water flows and also maintain natural nutrient levels in streams. Stormwater-friendly lawns and gardens will help you save money on fertilizers and time on upkeep once they become established.

A stormwater-friendly lawn

Following the steps below will not only help protect local streams and rivers but can result in direct and substantial cost savings to you, the homeowner.

- Set mower height to 3 inches or higher. Taller grass slows the rate of runoff and produces a deeper, denser root system, which will absorb more water, prevent erosion, and suppress weeds. Deeper roots also have access to more water stored in the ground and can reduce the need for irrigation during droughts.

- Retain grass clippings and chopped leaves onsite. A mulch-mower is ideal for retaining and spreading clippings on your lawn. The clippings decompose quickly, provide important nutrients for your lawn, and settle to create an organic layer on the soil that encourages stormwater infiltration. This technique can significantly reduce or eliminate the need for nitrogen fertilizers.

- Also, by spreading grass clippings on your lawn, you can reduce the amount of fertilizer needed.

- Keep clippings and chopped leaves out of streams, off the street, and out of storm drains. If mulching is not possible, bag the clippings and store them in a compost area where the organic material can be used as a fertilizer later. Blowing them onto a street or into storm drains deposits the clippings directly into local streams, where they decompose and become major pollutants by increasing nitrogen to unsafe levels for fish and other aquatic life.

- Fertilizers for your lawn...do you need them? If so,

what, where, when, and how much? Many lawns do not need fertilizer because they are already fertile or you have carried out the previously discussed practices. Using no fertilizer is ideal for the bay's health, but if your lawn is thin or has bare spots, you should consider fertilizing it.

- A dense vegetated cover is the most "stormwater-friendly" lawn so take the following steps to determine if fertilizer is necessary for your property:

- 1) Test your soil or consult a local professional or certified applicator.

There is no "one size fits all" when it comes to fertilizer. Needs vary drastically based on soil texture, pH levels, and nutrient levels. In fact, soil tests can reveal that lawns may be suffering from micronutrient deficiency, and standard chemical fertilizers may not alleviate the problem. Identifying these needs will reduce unnecessary applications, create a healthier lawn faster, and reduce your long-term costs.

- 2) Maximize the slow-release nitrogen in your fertilizer.

Typically called "water insoluble nitrogen," or WIN, on fertilizer bags, slow-release nitrogen limits nutrient runoff and exportation. This should be applied in the spring, not autumn, to provide a steady source of nutrients throughout the growing season.

- 3) Start with low amounts or fewer applications.

Your lawn may achieve its ideal coverage and growth with reduced amounts of fertilizer, saving time and money.

- 4) Apply only during the growing season and check the weather. Wait until the grass begins growing in March to fertilize and avoid fertilizing after October. Fertilizing during a lawn's dormant season increases the risk of the chemicals running off into streams or leaching into your water table because root systems are less active. Additionally, do not fertilize before it rains since most of it will wash off your lawn.

- 5) Do not fertilize or use pesticides within 15 to 20 feet of a stream and use riparian-specific herbicides, if necessary. Maintaining this distance will help keep chemicals out of the stream. Also, consider establishing a natural riparian buffer, instead.

- 6) Sweep any granulated chemicals off hard surfaces and back onto your lawn immediately: Your walkway, driveway, patio, or road is often a quick route to drainage pipes that discharge into local streams so make sure they're kept clean of chemicals.

A stormwater-friendly garden

Home gardens can contribute a considerable amount of nutrients and other pollution to streams and other water bodies if not cared for in a responsible way. This mainly applies to fertilizers and pesticides so here are some options:

- Garden fertilizers: Organic alternatives to chemicals include compost or manure. Compost can be created in your own back yard, is free, and contains the many nutrients needed for your vegetables. Also, be sure to apply organic fertilizers before planting to prevent runoff.

- Pesticides: When it comes to pesticides, identify the pest and research your options. Many insects are harmless to people and play an important role in maintaining a healthy lawn or garden ecosystem.

If there is a problem, however, identify the exact pest you have. Consult an expert because there are many nonchemical alternatives to controlling pests.

Pesticides can infiltrate the ground water, contaminate drinking supplies, and severely harm downstream ecosystems if applied incorrectly or unnecessarily.

In the long run, little actions, such as taking a stormwater-friendly approach to your garden and lawn, will have a big impact as all of us work together to protect our water's quality.

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Slate Belt Men's Quoit League

September 7, 2017

Bangor Elks 40 O'Neill's Place 16 – Wayne Hill 11-3, A.J. Gilliland 9-5, Dave Giaquinto 9-5
Bangor Jax 32 East Bangor Fire Co. 24 – Jeff Kluska 12-2, Mike Shafer 12-2
Oxford Fire Co. 37 Rescue Fire Co. 19 – Gary Fagan 13-1, Wayne Saylor 11-3
Roseto Legion 45 Columbia Fire Co. 11 – Woody Ivins 14-0, George Wilgus 13-1
Hillside Rod & Gun Club 43 Second Ward Fire Co. 13 – Adam Kluska 13-1, Phil Ascani 10-4, Brandon Malachowski 10-4
Bangor VFW 35 Roseto Rod & Gun Club 21 – Ryan Comunale 11-3; Larry Mucklin 9-5
Pen Argyl Legion 36 Liberty Fire Co. 20 – Brookes Kromer 14-0, Steve Pfeiffer 11-3; Buck Miller 10-4

September 14, 2017

Bangor Elks 49 Second Ward Fire Co. 9 – Chad Kreider 13-1, Jody Zengulis 13-1, A.J. Gilliland 12-2
Oxford Fire Co. 52 Columbia Fire Co. 4 – Wayne

Saylor 14-0, Gary Fagan 14-0
Pen Argyl Legion 33 Bangor Jax 23 – Kraig Kuster 10-4, Todd Lakey 9-5; John Saltern 7-7
Roseto Legion 35 Rescue Fire Co. 21
Hillside Rod & Gun Club 46 Roseto Rod & Gun Club 10 – John Hartzell 13-1, Derek Wynne 12-2, Dave Flick 12-2
O'Neill's Place 32 East Bangor Fire Co. 24 – Andy Conroy 11-3, Justin Wagner 10-4; Kyle Frankenfield 10-4
Liberty Fire Co. 29 Bangor VFW 27 – Evan Senay 11-3, John "Packy" Roberts 10-4; Nick LaBar 10-4

2017-2018 First Half Standings

Division 1 – Bangor Elks 2-0, Oxford Fire Co. 2-0, Hillside Rod & Gun Club 2-0, Pen Argyl Legion 2-0, Roseto Legion 2-0, Bangor Jax 1-1, O'Neill's Place 1-1
Division 2 – Liberty Fire Co. 1-1, Bangor VFW 1-1, East Bangor Fire Co. 0-2, Second Ward Fire Co. 0-2, Rescue Fire Co. 0-2, Columbia Fire Co. 0-2, Roseto Rod & Gun Club 0-2

BVMPL League Results

September 13, 2017

Bangor VFW - Team A 7 Devery's Pub & Grill 9; Pennsylvania Roadhouse 6 Slateford Inn 9; Hillside Rod & Gun Club 10 Pen Argyl Republican Club - Team A 6; Pen Argyl Republican Club - Team B 10 Richmond Hotel & Grill 6; Roseto Legion 4 Bangor VFW - Team B 11; Pen Argyl Legion 5 Wind Gap Legion 10; Roseto Rod & Gun Club 7 Five Points Inn 9.

Continued from page 1 Hurricane Irma

In Florida alone, officials from 31 agencies reported that they had already spent nearly \$250 million on preparations and recovery efforts. The final cost of the storm in the Caribbean and the U.S. will take months, if not years, to determine. More than 1.8 million customers were without power in Florida at one point.

Donations are needed, please go to: www.redcross.org/donate and make your pledge. This is one of the best & safest organizations to send your money to. They disburse funds for correct items needed at the crucial times of the recovery process.

Federal Emergency Management Administration said 25 percent of the homes in the Keys was destroyed. Another 65 percent suffered major damage. The damage is so bad the Navy deployed the USS Iwo Jima, USS New York and the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln to help with search and rescue as damage that has been called a looming "humanitarian crisis" continues to be assessed.

Caribbean had more than three dozen people killed in the Caribbean as Hurricane Irma tore through the region. Upwards of 99 percent of structures were at least partly damaged in hard-hit Anguilla, Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, St. Martin, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Turks and Caicos.

Ronald Sanders, who has served as Antigua and Barbuda's ambassador to the U.S., said of the island. "For the first time in 300 years, there's not a single living person on the island of Barbuda — a civilization that has existed on that island for over 300 years has now been extinguished."

The situation remains dire in parts of the Caribbean with some residents running out of food and water as power outages linger. In the U.S. Virgin Islands, FEMA and the U.S. military were helping to rescue people still blocked in their homes by debris, nearly a week after Irma devastated the islands. Rescue teams of 130 members of the New York Air National Guard, along with equipment were sent to the Virgin Islands. The Dutch Red Cross said more than 200 people were still listed as missing on St. Maarten, the Dutch side of St. Martin.

Irma didn't stop in south Florida. The storm was so big it effected central and eastern states as well. In Georgia at least three people died in Georgia, including a woman who died in Forsyth County Monday after a tree collapsed on top of her vehicle and Pecan growers lost 30 percent of their crop, and cotton farmers lost 20-40 percent.

In South Carolina at least three people died in South Carolina as a result of the storm, including a Columbia city employee who was killed in a single-vehicle wreck while on the way to help with a downed tree. Gov. Henry McMaster said he did not order an evacuation of the city due to the number of routes out of the city.

Almost all of the electric service disrupted by Hurricane Irma in South Carolina had been restored as of Friday morning. Only about 1,500 customers across the state were without service by that time.

Blue Valley Times Football Contest

ONE OVERALL WINNER!! We will keep a running total of every week and the winner at the end of the regular season will win \$100 in gift certificates from the Blue Valley Times Advertisers! We will have ONE tie breaker to come on the last week.

Instructions: Circle the winner. EVEN number is home team.
Games listed at the bottom.

1 vs 2	11 vs 12	21 vs 22
3 vs 4	13 vs 14	23 vs 24
5 vs 6	15 vs 16	25 vs 26
7 vs 8	17 vs 18	27 vs 28
9 vs 10	19 vs 20	29 vs 30

Email or mail entry form to
900 North Main Street, Bangor,
PA 18013 or bvtimes@rcn.com.

Entry deadline is Friday
by 12noon.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Whitehall | 2. Easton | 17. Palmerton | 18. Bangor |
| 3. Bethlehem Catholic | 4. Liberty | 19. Palisades | 20. Catasauqua |
| 5. Freedom | 6. Parkland | 21. Wilson | 22. Northern Lehigh |
| 7. Pocono Mt. East | 8. William Allen | 23. Pen Argyl | 24. Northwestern Lehigh |
| 9. Northampton | 10. Emmaus | 25. Salisbury | 26. Notre Dame GP |
| 11. East Stbg South | 12. Nazareth | 27. Southern Lehigh | 28. Saucon Valley |
| 13. Pocono Mt. West | 14. Pleasant Valley | 29. Dieruff | 30. Allentown Ctr Catholic |
| 15. East Stbg North | 16. Stroudsburg | | |

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