

# Storm Water Management -Grass Clippings

## How can Grass pollute our waterways?



Did you know that grass clippings contain phosphorus, the nutrient that turns lakes green with algae! One bushel of fresh grass clippings can contain 0.1 lbs. of phosphorus—enough to produce 30-50 pounds of algae growth if it finds its way to a lake or river!

Did you know that storm drains are not connected to the sanitary sewer systems and treatment plants? Whatever enters the catch basins in our parking lots and roads goes untreated into our creeks, streams, rivers and lakes! The primary purpose of storm drains is to carry rainwater away from developed areas to prevent flooding.

## What Can You Do?

- Leave grass clippings on the lawn.
- Direct grass clippings away from streets, driveways, sidewalks and other paved areas.
- Sweep up grass clippings and return them to the lawn.
- Set the lawn mower at a higher setting (over 2.5 inches) letting shorter blades fall back onto the lawn as natural fertilizer.
- Sharpen mower blades every 1 - 3 years.
- Mow when your lawn needs it, not on a fixed schedule.
- Mix grass clippings with leaves and soil to make a backyard compost pile.



## Other benefits of managing grass clippings!

- Grass clippings are composed of 85% water!
- With grass recycling, use of fertilizers can be reduced by 30 - 40% or more!
- Lawns mowed higher are more competitive against weeds.
- Lawns mowed higher withstand heat stress better, need less watering, and are more resilient, reducing bare spots and soil erosion.
- Leaving grass clippings in place leaves the equivalent of 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 ft<sup>2</sup> - the same amount you would get from 1 fertilizer application.

