

What's Going Down Your Storm Sewer?



Inlet Filter Nets, Advanced Drainage Systems Inc.



Nearly 30 lbs., of grass clipping were removed in August and September

Currently, water quality is a hot topic in Iowa, where many of our lakes and rivers are suffering. Statewide most bodies of water have agricultural runoff draining to them, causing a variety of problems. However, Easter Lake has an almost entirely urban watershed, with its own set of pollutants entering the lake. In the Easter Lake watershed, pollutants are carried by rain water into storm sewers which lead directly to Yeader Creek and Easter Lake.

Some common pollutants that enter storm sewers in urban areas include grass clippings, leaves, sediment, sand, oil, fertilizers, and dog waste. Surprisingly one of the most detrimental pollutants to water quality is grass clippings. These clippings are packed full of phosphorous and other nutrients. These nutrients travel to and

pollute Easter lake causing algal blooms.

Recently, two inlet filter nets were donated by Advanced Drainage Systems, Inc. were installed into storm drains and are capturing around 80% if sediment and suspended solids that enter the net.

The nets were installed in two neighborhoods in August and have done an excellent job of catching debris. Since installation the nets have trapped over 30 lbs. of grass clippings which have tested for high levels of phosphorous. It is well known that a variety of pollutants flow into storm drains, and we hope to use these nets to give the project a better idea of what pollutants are entering the lake from local neighborhoods. This information will then be used to improve pollutants reduction efforts with watershed residents.

Pollution Prevention: P Free Fertilizer

Why is phosphorous harmful?

Phosphorous from fertilizers is a major source of pollution in our lakes, ponds, and streams. Storm drains that catch runoff from our lawns and driveways, carry the phosphorous to these important water systems. Too much phosphorous in the water can lead to algal blooms that lower the oxygen levels and can kill fish and other organisms.

How you can help!

Locate the fertilizer label that shows the nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium levels (N-P-K). Choose a fertilizer that is P-free or contains "0" phosphorous. Carefully follow instructions on the fertilizer label and apply only what is needed. Sweep grass clippings, leaves, and fertilizer from driveways and streets so it doesn't pollute Easter Lake.



Conservation Corps Building Rain Gardens



The Easter Lake Watershed Project is working with local residents to hire the Conservation Corps to help reduce stormwater runoff from entering Easter Lake. The group will be coming this October to work with project coordinators and build 5 rain gardens in the watershed. The goal is to build rain gardens on multiple properties at a time, to increase the number of practices going in around the watershed. This installation method paired with the Easter Lake cost-share program allows for homeowners to have rain gardens installed for a very small input cost!

Many of the water quality issues in Easter Lake are a result of pollutants being carried by stormwater through storm sewers and dumping into Easter Lake and Yeader Creek. In order to make a real difference in how this water is managed, a large amount of rainscaping practices will need to be built in the watershed. This Fall will be the first chance for local residents to get a rain garden built by the Conservation Corps. The project plans to expand on this opportunity and continue hiring the Corps to meet local needs. If you are interested in getting a rain garden built by the Conservation Corps, contact Outreach Coordinator John Swanson.

Rainscaping Practice: Rain Gardens

A rain garden is a simple practice that allows for an area of your yard to be turned into a garden that manages stormwater. To build a rain garden, an area roughly 10% of the size of the roof that drains to it is excavated and the soil is replaced with a sand/compost mixture and a flat 6-9" ponding area. This gives water time to sit and naturally infiltrate into the ground, rather than run off yards. This practice is also eligible for the up to 75% cost share assistance.



A newly planted rain garden in the Easter Lake Watershed.

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