

## TOP FIVE WAYS TO HELP DANE COUNTY LAKES AND STREAMS

1. **Learn more about local waters and join a local watershed or conservation group.** Go to our **Dane County Waters** page ([www.countyofdane.com/commissions/lakes/waters.shtml](http://www.countyofdane.com/commissions/lakes/waters.shtml)) and use the **Watershed Locator** to find out what watershed you live in. Then go to **Watershed Associations, Friends Groups and Other Natural Resource Groups** to locate an active group in your area. There are many groups in Dane County all working to preserve and enhance the natural resources here. Check out their web sites or get in touch with their contact person to find out how you can get involved. If you don't find one where you live, consider starting one!
2. **Test your soil before applying fertilizers containing phosphorus.** Apply phosphorus-containing lawn fertilizer *only* if a soil test shows it's needed. If it's not needed, be sure to purchase phosphorus-free fertilizers if you fertilize. Look for 0 as the middle number—all fertilizers show three numbers on the label (10-0-5, for example). The middle number represents the amount of phosphorus. So, buy zero. Learn more about phosphorus on our **Phosphorus Control in Dane County** page ([www.countyofdane.com/commissions/lakes/phosphorus.shtml](http://www.countyofdane.com/commissions/lakes/phosphorus.shtml))
3. **Keep leaves and grass clippings out of the street and gutters, compost, and practice other water-friendly lawn care.** Instead of raking your leaves to the curb, start a compost pile. Leaves make great fertilizer for vegetable and flower gardens. They can also be tilled right into your garden. Or you could use a mulching mower to chop the leaves into little bits for your turf. If you do rake, make sure that the leaves stay out of the gutter. Find out when your municipality's leaf collection is, and rake as close to that date as possible. If you have to rake earlier, cover your leaves with a tarp to keep them from blowing into the gutter. Learn where the nearest storm drain is in relation to your house. Then learn which lake or stream receives the stormwater that drain sends. Consider marking storm drains with messages telling people not to dump anything down storm drains that they don't want in the lakes. Call Mindy Habecker at 224-3718 to learn more about storm drain marking. Read about it in our **You're the Solution to Water Pollution** series of brochures ([www.countyofdane.com/commissions/lakes/waterpollution.shtml](http://www.countyofdane.com/commissions/lakes/waterpollution.shtml))
4. **Keep water on site and soil in place (so it stays out of our waters).** Try building rain gardens, installing rain barrels and directing roof gutters and downspouts to grassy areas (pervious areas) rather than hard surfaces (such as driveways and sidewalks that will deliver stormwater to storm drains and eventually our water resources). Be sure to mulch or plant any bare soil so that rain and snow don't erode it away. Check out our **Rain Garden Information** page. ([www.countyofdane.com/commissions/lakes/raingarden.shtml](http://www.countyofdane.com/commissions/lakes/raingarden.shtml))
5. **Reduce motorized vehicle use; maintain vehicles in an environmentally friendly way (don't dump oil in storm drains or on the street, for example).** Get your oil changed at a service station. If you change your car's oil yourself, take the used oil to a collection site for recycling. Never let any oil make its way to the storm drain. Make sure your car doesn't leak antifreeze, brake fluid or windshield wiper fluid. These leaks and drips could be washed into the storm drain from the street or your driveway with the next rainstorm. Make sure you sweep your driveway instead of using the hose to wash debris away. Wash your car on your lawn instead of your driveway. Or go to a carwash.