

What's Going On In Our Corner? Southeast WI MS4 Permittees



Residential Services For Yard Waste

Yard waste piles can concentrate nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) that could runoff into nearby waterways or be conveyed to storm sewers. Because of this, communities may offer pick-up services or residential drop-off areas for yard waste. Offering these types of services can help manage materials better and prevent excess nutrients from entering the environment.

However, it is important that residents are made aware of how to stage their yard waste materials before picking up. For example, instructing residents to pile their yard wastes on the terrace versus in the street or gutter if possible.

Additionally, if your community offers residential drop-off, the placement of yard waste piles is important and should consider the following questions to reduce polluted stormwater runoff:

Is the pile stored on a slope? What is the proximity to a storm sewer(s), waterways, or wetlands? Could the pile be stored on pervious surface instead of impervious? Is it possible to store the pile in an enclosed space (e.g., canopy, 3-sided bay)?



Photo credit: [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/1388888888/)

Topics

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City of Harford And City Of West Allis: Freshly Cut Grass, But What About The Clippings?

The city of Harford and city of West Allis are not alone – residents blowing their grass clippings or piling yard waste in the street, especially during the peak grass growing season in spring, can cause real problems. Storm drains clogged with grass clippings can be a source of nutrient pollution and cause flooding on the street.

John Griffin, the city of Harford's Engineer, explained how grass clippings and vegetative debris are ongoing issues for city maintenance crews. Griffin stated that the city is often looking for ways to prevent maintenance by addressing the behavior of residents through education and outreach. In addition to informational and educational communication with residents, the city has ordinances that apply to grass clippings and other vegetative debris entering the storm sewer that can be used to compel compliance.

To combat this persistent problem, Griffin recalled that in 2022, the city's Police and Building Inspection staff distributed a notice when grass clippings or other vegetative debris was observed in the roadway. The notice was placed by the officer or inspector in the door of a residence or business where the grass clippings originated. This method of notification (and the implied reminder of enforcement action and fines) has proven most effective in stopping the practice. To date, notices have been placed on 20-30 doorways per year. Griffin noted since the placing of notices, no repeat notices or fines have been necessary.

In the city of West Allis, the Department of Public Works (DPW) and Robert Hutter, Assistant City Engineer, explained how the blowing of grass clippings and placement of brush and yard waste in the road has created problems in their city.

As a result of the debris, the city has seen stormwater inlets clogged and flooding on the streets, thus creating a safety issue for those driving on the roads. Similar to the city of Hartford, the city of West Allis has found that a combination of education (in-person and passive mechanisms such as door hangers) has helped. Through education and the reminder of the city's ordinance (7.05 (8) (a) (b)) that prohibits placing yard waste in streets, Hutter stated they typically do not see repeat violators after educating.

If your community would like to learn more from the city of Harford and city of West Allis about grass clippings and yard waste issues or are looking for sample ordinance(s) language to adopt, please contact:

- **City of Harford:** John Griffin, City Engineer, jgriffin@hartford.wi.gov
- **City of West Allis:** Robert Hutter, Assistant City Engineer, rhutter@westalliswi.gov

Street Sweeping Practices

Every day, all day long, streets accumulate debris. In the winter, it's salt and snow; in fall, it's leaves, and during the warm months, not only do plants drop seeds, but flowers, berries, branches and grass clippings are blown on the street and brush/yard waste seems to appear out of nowhere. Of course, this is in addition to other pollutants like those affiliated with traffic and littering. All of which is waiting for the storm to wash it away. Unless you get there first.

Yes, there are other Best Management Practices (BMPs), but today we are talking street sweeping. Since sweeping is such a common, well-known practice, it can be difficult to have ground-breaking ideas for improvement. However, based on comments we've heard, here are some reminders and tips:

"If they sweep, how come the roads are still dirty?"

Reminder: Since debris accumulates in the curb line, it is important to sweep there.

Tip: If parked cars prevent sweeping the curb line, consider parking regulations. If your parking regulations vary (i.e., during the week parking is alternate side, during the weekend parking is both sides), sweep when the curb line is accessible.

"I don't think they sweep streets. I've never seen a sweeper."

Reminder: Street sweeping often occurs at night so residents may not be aware the street was swept. Also, if the curb line is not adequately swept, residents may not realize any street sweeping occurred.

Tip: Inform residents when sweeping occurs (e.g., website, social media, mailers) and use the opportunity to provide information such as alternate side parking regulations that are in place to facilitate proper street sweeping.

"The roads look so clean after the rain!"

Reminder: If roads are noticeably cleaner after the rain, this may indicate sweeping practices need improvement.

Tip: Consider ways to improve sweeping practices such as sweeping more frequently, sweeping prior to rain events or implementing parking regulations to access the curb line.

Root Pike Watershed Initiative Network (WIN): The Stormwater Pond Playbook

Reduce Costs And Improve Water Quality

Let Root-Pike WIN's "Stormwater Pond Playbook" be your coach this season for better stormwater design and maintenance solutions. With input from MVPs like Hey & Associates, Stormwater Solutions and DNR stormwater staff, the Playbook stops pond owners from running in circles with habitual mowing, dredging and algae treatments.

In this document, a naturalized stormwater pond design, regenerative stormwater conveyance system, inclusion of pre-treatment vegetated swales and sediment forebay retrofit went head-to-head against a traditional stormwater pond design and won every time with lower long-term maintenance costs. Whether you are battling algae, nuisance geese, turbid water or high maintenance costs, this guide has a play to beat common pond problems.

The Old Stormwater Play: Capture stormwater in a pond planted with turf grass and filled with geese, turbid water and algae.

The New Stormwater Play: Maximize infiltration with native plant species, block erosion, capture sediment in forebays, and go long on reducing your pond's cost of ownership.

Learn more about how you can be a champion for Wisconsin's freshwater resources by contacting Root-Pike WIN's stormwater consultant at kristine@rootpikewin.org.



Composting

In some communities, it is a common practice to compost leaves and/or yard wastes collected since most Wisconsin license landfills do not accept this material. Because of this, there are a few important things to remember if your community decides to compost:

Maintaining The Composting Pile

A compost pile should be aerated to add oxygen to the mix. If the pile is not turned over on a routine basis, the pile can become anaerobic (no oxygen), and create a foul smell and result in a compost with a lower nutritional value.

For composting sites over 50 cubic yards, a permit is required. For more information on obtaining a composting permit, please visit the [department's website](#) to learn more about what can be composted and rules and regulations.

Placement Of Composting Pile

Materials should be stored in a way that considers the flow path of stormwater. Storing the pile on pervious surface or covered with a canopy can help prevent compost runoff containing high levels of nutrients. Due to high nutrients, it is important that materials are stored away from storm drains, surface water and wetlands.

Have A Plan On How Your Community Will Get Rid Of The Composted Material

To avoid excess accumulation of composted material, communities can offer free pick-up of material to residents. Other communities may also partner with a composting farm, topsoil business or other related companies to ensure that the material is put to good use.

Upcoming Dates, Reminders And Events

Clean Water Fund Stormwater Projects

- **Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Funding**

Do you need funding to build stormwater infrastructure in your municipality? Look no further, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will contribute additional funding through the Wisconsin DNR Environmental Loans Program including the Clean Water Fund for stormwater projects. The funds are for reasonable and necessary costs directly related to the planning, design and construction of water-quality-related storm water infrastructure projects that must lead to or provide treatment of storm water. You can learn more about [building solutions for stormwater pollution](#) online.

Proposals for Wisconsin's Coastal Communities

- Governor Tony Evers and Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) Secretary Blumenfeld recently announced a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program (WCMP) grants. Proposals should address needs and priorities for public access, historic preservation, Great Lakes education, community development, wetland protection, habitat restoration, or pollution control. Funded projects must start no earlier than July 1, 2024, completed by June 30, 2025, and must be located in one or more Wisconsin counties adjacent to Lake Superior, Lake Michigan or Green Bay. Applicants are encouraged to [reach out to program staff](#) to discuss project ideas, eligibility, the application process, or related concerns. A virtual workshop is scheduled for Sept. 19, 2023, and applications are due on Friday, Nov. 3, 2023. [Additional details and application materials are available on the WCMP Grants Program webpage](#). An [interactive story map](#) with details about some past coastal grants is also available.

Save The Date!

- **Smart Salting Opportunities –**

Aug. 22 and/or Aug. 23 (in-person): Milwaukee Riverkeeper is inviting winter maintenance professionals to participate in two, [FREE Smart Salting Workshops](#) led by Minnesota's [Bolton & Menk, Inc.](#) Participants in these workshops will learn state-of-the-art winter maintenance practices, including how to transition to liquid deicers and reduce overall salt application to roadways or parking lots and sidewalks. Participants will hear success stories from organizations who have implemented these practices and have saved time and money!

WI Salt Wise 2023 Trainings: Free training for winter maintenance professionals who remove snow, apply road salt or maintain snow removal equipment. Learn how using the right amount of salt can save time, budget and our waters. The training will include best management practices to keep paved areas safe, guidance on how to determine the right amount of salt to use, benefits of liquids, and case studies from local applicators. Find more information, including how to sign up on [WI Salt Wise's website](#).

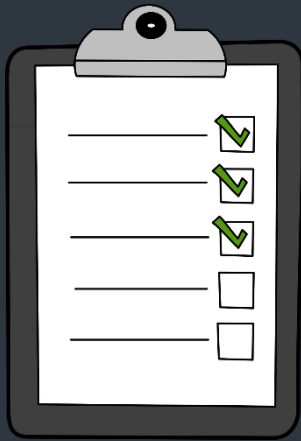
Professional Snowfighters Association Series Of Winter Maintenance Webinars:

On Aug. 23 at 10 a.m.: “How you can easily get some ‘Road Surface Reality’ when it comes to winter maintenance”. [Sign up for this free webinar](#).

On Sept. 6 at 10 a.m.: “Can you automate your application rates in winter maintenance?”

- **2023 Clean Rivers, Clean Lakes (CRCL) Conference On Sept. 7**

Sweet Water's CRCL Conference is coming up! The conference brings together the watershed community in southeastern Wisconsin to discuss strategies and projects to improve the health of our watersheds. The conference will take place on Thursday, Sept. 7, and will be held at Milwaukee Area Technical College Mequon Campus. More information is available on [Sweet Water's website](#).



Want to be featured in the MS4 Fall Edition?

We want to hear about your municipality's success stories, practical procedures that work well for your MS4 program, etc. so we can share with the rest of the region!

Please reach out to SE stormwater specialists with stories:

Lexi Passante

(Elxius.passante@wisconsin.gov)

or

Samantha Katt

(Samantha.katt@wisconsin.gov)

Did You Know...

“Statewide precipitation between 1940 and 1950 averaged 30.8 inches per year and increased to 35.2 inches between 2008 and 2018 [according to NOAA data](#). This trend is expected to continue, putting additional pressure on stormwater systems in the future.” –[Wisconsin Policy Forum | Peering Down the Pipe](#) (wispolicyforum.org)