



## Stormwater Outreach for Lawn Care and Landscaping Businesses

Lawn care and landscaping services are potential sources of a wide variety of substances that are very harmful to fish and other aquatic life. Stormwater picks up grass clippings, other vegetative debris, various sediments, fertilizers, and pesticides. If these substances make it into the street, it flows untreated to storm drains that empty into the creeks that flow through the city.

The Walla Walla River and its tributaries are designated as water quality limited (degraded) by the State of Washington and we need your cooperation to improve the water quality of our rivers and creeks. Some of our local creeks exceed water quality standards for fecal coliform, pesticides, temperature, and PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls). High levels of fecal coliform, which come from pet waste and failed septic systems, make fish, animals, and people sick and can make swimming unsafe. Pesticides and PCBs can be toxic to aquatic life and may cause cancer. Also, warmer water contains less oxygen that aquatic organisms need to survive.

[Chapter 13.15 of the Walla Walla Municipal Code](#) prohibits the discharge of any material other than clean, uncontaminated stormwater into the City storm drain system, underground injection control wells (i.e., drywells), and/or surface and ground waters such as Mill Creek or any of the many other creeks running through the city. Prohibited contaminants listed in the code include, but are not limited to, trash, debris, petroleum products, paints, detergents, drain cleaners, pesticides, fertilizer, chlorinated swimming pool or spa wastewater, chlorine, bromine, other disinfectants, food wastes, lawn clippings, silt, sediment, concrete, and sewage. Storm drains do NOT empty into sewer pipelines that carry wastewater from our sinks and toilets to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Only clean stormwater may be discharged into stormwater systems, including drywells, and surface or ground waters.

The following are best practices of what you can do to help prevent and reduce stormwater pollution:

### **Yard Waste**

Grass clippings and other vegetative debris cannot be dumped in the street or into creeks. It can block the proper drainage of stormwater in the gutter and storm drains causing ponding of water in the street which can be a traffic safety hazard. In addition, grass clippings and other vegetative debris add excessive nutrients to our creeks, which can lead to algae blooms and reduced oxygen levels in slower moving water bodies. Unbagged leaves may be placed in piles in the street only during the leaf collection season in the fall. An open pathway along the curb should be left for stormwater to flow down the gutter to a storm drain. Other yard waste should be disposed of in a green waste recycling container, taken to the Compost Facility at the Sudbury Regional Landfill or used to create compost on-site. When mowing next to the street, don't direct the discharge chute towards the street; it should be directed back into the lawn. When blowing off a driveway or sidewalk, direct it back into your yard.

### **Fertilizer and Pesticides**

Apply fertilizer and pesticides so none of it gets into the street. This is especially a concern with hand-held devices that broadcast these materials at some distance from the device. Avoid over-fertilizing as this can leach into the groundwater. Fertilizer and grass clippings add excessive nutrients to our creeks, which can lead to algae blooms and reduced oxygen levels in slower moving water bodies. Pesticides can be toxic to aquatic life and cause cancer.



### **Dirt and Sediment**

Dirt, sand, gravel, bark, or other landscaping material may not be stockpiled or stored in the street. Also prevent exposed soil, sand, gravel, and other material from eroding into the street. Sediment destroys spawning areas for steelhead, salmon, and other fish by smothering eggs laid in the gravel. It also fills our storm drains requiring more frequent maintenance and settles in creeks which reduce their ability to carry water and potentially cause flooding and increase bank erosion.

Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated. Please be advised that violations of the above-referenced municipal code could result in fines, penalties, or other remedies as allowable by law.

Remember...only rain down the drain. Keep our rivers and creeks healthy!

### **Questions and/or Comments?**

Contact the City of Walla Walla Stormwater Coordinator at 509.527.4537