

# STEWARDSHIP GUIDE



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**IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

## 8 Adopt your storm drain

Take responsibility for keeping your block's storm drain free of leaves and trash. By keeping your storm drain clean, you're eliminating all that debris from entering and polluting the River!



## 9 Get Active In Your Community

*Residents near Diamond Lake came together to improve water quality through water-friendly landscaping practices, educational workshops, and storm drain adoptions. Find out more at [www.goblue.friendsofdiamonlake.org](http://www.goblue.friendsofdiamonlake.org).*

Serve on your watershed district board or park - or planning commission; join your lake association; and work with your neighbors to keep your streets and storm drains clean.

## 10 Participate in community clean-ups

Serve on your watershed district board or park - or planning commission; join your lake association; and work with your neighbors to keep your streets and storm drains clean.

*Community clean-ups like MCWD's Minnehaha Creek Clean Up are a great way to join your friends and neighbors in keeping your community clean.*



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Welcome to the State of the River Report Stewardship Guide. This guide highlights the “Top 10” stewardship actions that citizens can take to help protect and preserve the Mississippi River and its watershed for future generations.

Storm sewers discharge directly to rivers, lakes and streams untreated. Household wastewater ultimately discharges to surface waters throughout the state after treatment. Either way, if it goes down the drain, it goes in your water.

By working with your friends and neighbors, you can help reduce both sources of pollution to the Mississippi River watershed.

## IN YOUR HOME OR APARTMENT

### 1 Don't flush your pills

Expired or unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medications should never be disposed of down the drain. Wastewater treatment systems are not designed to remove these pollutants.

If your local drug store does not participate in a drug take-back program, dissolve medicines in liquid, mix with fine materials (coffee grounds, cat litter) and place into a sturdy, sealable sandwich bag or plastic container before putting it in the garbage

For more information, contact your county solid waste office, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, or visit [DisposeMyMeds.org](http://DisposeMyMeds.org).

### 2 Use triclosan-free products

Triclosan is an antimicrobial product used in a variety of household products, including hand soap. Triclosan and its byproducts pose risks for aquatic life and health in the River. The use of antibacterial products provides no health benefits over plain soap and water, and should be avoided.

Check labels on soaps and personal care products and avoid those that contain triclosan. For more information, visit: [www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/triclosan](http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/triclosan).

## IN YOUR YARD AND GARDEN

### 3 Maintain a healthy lawn

Healthy lawns help reduce runoff pollution. To maintain a water-friendly lawn, set your lawnmower on a high setting (3") and leave grass clippings on the lawn. Aerate your lawn, and avoid excess watering.

If you use lawn chemicals and fertilizers, keep them on the lawn – not on sidewalks, streets, and driveways. Homeowners or property managers who hire lawn care providers should look for those who have completed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Summer Turf Care Best Practices certification.

And remember: if you only go to a corner of your lawn to mow it, odds are you can replace it with flowering plants.

### 4 Keep the rain drop where it falls

Capture and filter runoff with rain gardens, rain barrels, and perennial vegetation before it reaches the street. Make sure your downspouts are directed to gardens and other areas that can use the water - not onto your driveway, street, or sidewalk. For more information visit [www.bluthumb.org](http://www.bluthumb.org)

*This rain garden was installed by a homeowner in the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.*

### 5 Pick up after your pet

Pet waste can wash into storm sewers and contribute to bacteria pollution in waters. Clean pet waste from your yard, and always pick up after your pet on walks.



## SIDEWALKS AND DRIVEWAYS

### 6 Rake up, sweep up, pick up

Leaves, grass, lawn chemicals, and winter salts can wash into storm sewers and pollute the River. Remove these materials from your street, sidewalk, and driveway before they wash into the River.

### 7 Water-friendly auto care

Dirt and chemicals from your car can contribute to River pollution. Wash your car at a car wash, where runoff is collected and treated. If you wash your car at home, do it on the lawn, where the water can filter into the ground naturally.

Regular car maintenance and tune-ups help detect leaks, and prevent chemicals from washing into rivers, lakes and streams. And if you seal your driveway, always choose asphalt-based sealants. Coal-tar sealant alternatives contain higher levels of harmful chemicals.