

# RAIN TO RIVERS



**RAIN TO RIVERS** is an education campaign sponsored by the Chippewa Valley Storm Water Forum. The Forum is a partnership between eleven Lower Chippewa Valley Area municipalities and Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties, with support from UW-Extension, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The forum facilitates the coordination of information and education programs among the different members.

**RAIN TO RIVERS IS AN EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN OF THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY STORM WATER MANAGEMENT FORUM.**



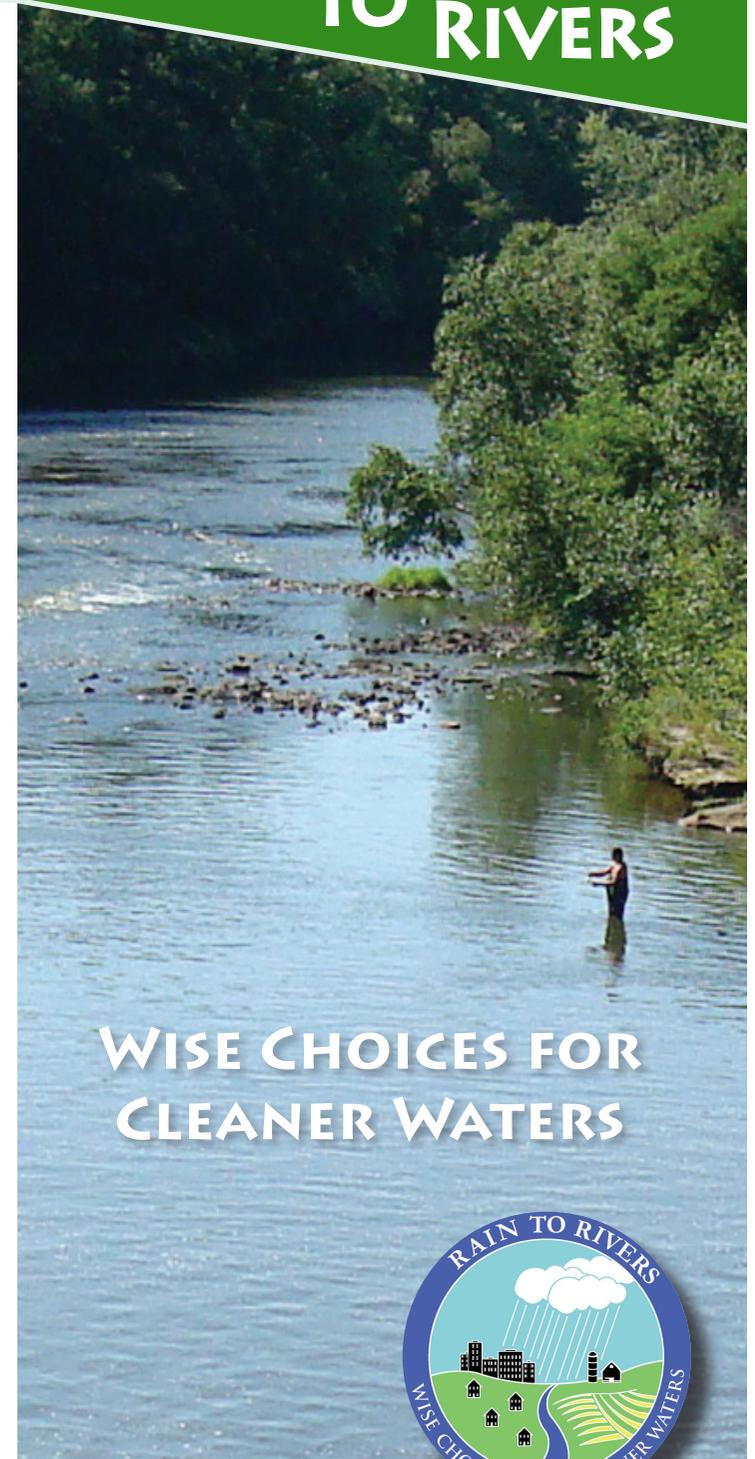
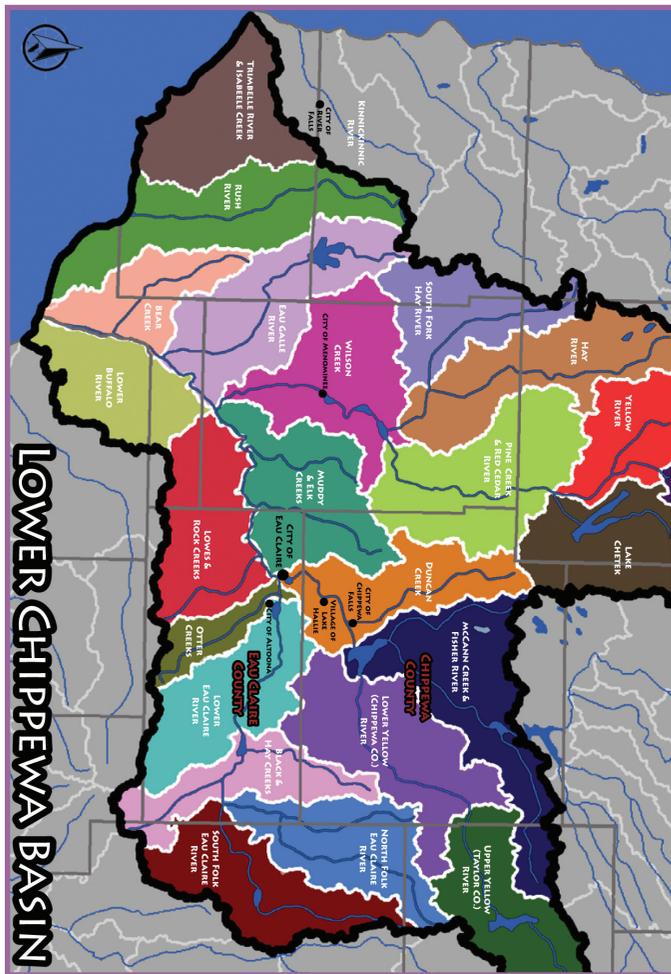
- VILLAGE OF LAKE HALLIE •
- TOWN OF UNION •
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- TOWN OF SEYMOUR •
- TOWN OF EAGLE POINT •
- TOWN OF LAFAYETTE •

## PARTNERS



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

[BASINEDUCATION.UWEX.EDU/LOWERCHIP/RAIN2RIVERS](http://BASINEDUCATION.UWEX.EDU/LOWERCHIP/RAIN2RIVERS)



**WISE CHOICES FOR CLEANER WATERS**



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## CLEAN WATER STARTS IN YOUR OWN YARD...

Water pollution has many sources. Up to half of all pollutants come not from factories or wastewater treatment plants, but from many diffuse sources resulting from our own everyday activities.

For example, dog waste left on the ground or chemicals sprayed on your lawn can get washed into the nearest waterways by the next rain. Pet waste and pesticides in your yard may not seem like they could have a large effect on local streams and lakes, but our waterways receive storm water from thousands of backyards. What we do in our own backyards and our own communities can make all the difference to the quality of our lakes and streams.

## WHAT IS STORM WATER RUNOFF?

Water that does not soak into the ground or evaporate is called storm water runoff. Storm water runoff flows over the ground surface and then into storm drains and ditches that empty directly into our local waterways. Storm water runoff volumes are greater in cities, villages, and other developed areas because water can't soak through the pavement, rooftops, and concrete.

## WHAT IS STORM WATER POLLUTION?

Storm water runoff conveys more than just water to streams, rivers, and lakes. Rain and snowmelt carry dirt, grease, trash and more from roads, parking lots and other hard surfaces into storm drains and ditches, and these empty directly into our waterways. Storm water also carries excess nutrients, like phosphorus, which turns our lakes and streams green and smelly and harms fish. The way to protect and clean our waterways is to make sure only rain—and nothing else—goes into the storm drains and ditches.

## WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

A watershed is an area of land that drains to a particular waterway, be it a lake, stream or river. Your neighborhood, school and workplace are all part of a watershed; the roads we drive on and the parks we play in are also part of a watershed. Look at the map to learn where your water goes. Most of the storm water runoff in the Lower Chippewa Basin eventually drains into the Chippewa, Eau Claire and Red Cedar Rivers. The Kinnickinnic River to the west drains through River Falls.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

### BE A POOPER SCOOPER: PICK UP AFTER YOUR PETS

You can flush pet waste down the toilet, bury it 4-6 inches deep in the yard, toss it in the garbage, or dispose in a specially designed composter. Do not put it in your vegetable garden or compost that will be used for your garden.



### KEEP SOIL IN YOUR YARD AND OUT OF OUR WATERWAYS

Bare soil easily washes into the storm drains. Cover exposed soil with seed and mulch as soon as possible. Cover piles of soil for your yard or garden with a tarp until you're ready to use it. If you're building a home, choose a builder who takes extra care not to track mud onto the streets, and who installs and maintains practices that prevent soil from washing off your lot during construction.



### KEEP LEAVES AND GRASS CLIPPINGS OUT OF DITCHES, SWALES AND WATERWAYS

Use leaves and/or grass clippings as mulch, or add it to a compost pile. Clippings and leaves can also be tilled directly into gardens or flowerbeds. If you live in a city or village, check with your community for leaf, brush and grass clipping pick-up dates or disposal locations.

### KICK YOUR CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY

Use non-toxic alternatives to conventional household chemicals whenever possible. When not possible, properly dispose of hazardous household chemicals such as oil-based paints, cleaning chemicals, pesticides, solvents, batteries and disinfectants. Contact your local municipality to learn more about how to dispose of hazardous chemicals.

### CONSERVE WATER: KEEP YOUR RAIN

Maximize infiltration in your yard by directing rain water away from paved areas. Plant a rain garden filled with deep-rooted grasses and wildflowers to maximize water absorption into the ground. If you don't have a rain garden, aim downspouts to grassy areas or into a rain barrel.



### DON'T OVERFEED YOUR LAWN

Test your soil before buying and applying fertilizer to your lawn. If soil tests show that your lawn does need fertilizer, apply according to manufacture's instructions. Don't "double the dose." After fertilizer application, you should sweep excess fertilizer off the driveway and street.



### PRACTICE CAREFUL CAR CARE

Regularly maintain your car and fix any oil, radiator or transmission leak as soon as you see them. If you change your own oil, make sure to take the used oil to a recycling collection site. Never pour it behind the garage, on the driveway to kill weeds or down the storm drain. Also, consider using a commercial car wash, or wash your car on your lawn to prevent car-washing detergents from washing down the storm drain.

### USE A PROPER CONTAINER FOR TRASH AND RECYCLABLES

Don't put trash into the street or gutter where it can be washed into the storm sewer system and then to local waterways.



### BE A WATERSHED WATCHDOG

If you see a potential storm water problem, such as clogged storm drains, trash in the gutter, pollutants washing into or discharging from storm sewers, or uncontrolled erosion from construction sites, contact your local municipal or county public works department.

### MAKE FRIENDS WITH YOUR WATERSHED

Join a local watershed or conservation group and help clean up waterways in your area.

- Lower Chippewa River Alliance
- Friends of Half Moon Lake
- Beaver Creek Reserve
- Sustainable Dunn
- Red Cedar Lakes
- Tainter-Menomin Lake Improvement Association
- Lake Altoona Rehab and Protection District
- Lake Eau Claire
- Lake Wissota Improvement Association
- The Kinnickinnic Land Trust
- Kiap TU Wish Chapter of Trout Unlimited (Western WI)