

Wisconsin River Basin

Clean Waterways Project

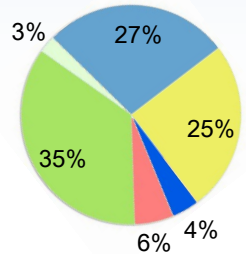


Urban landscapes for clean water

Welcome to your watershed

A **watershed** is the land area that drains into a particular water body. The Wisconsin River Basin Clean Waterways Project spans Wisconsin's central corridor from the headwaters in Vilas County to Lake Wisconsin in Columbia County, covering 9,156 square miles — approximately 15 % of the state. The area is currently part of a comprehensive study by the Wisconsin DNR to develop a plan to improve the quality of water in the river, its impoundments, and tributaries.

Land Cover:



What's the problem?

When it rains, water runs over the land, picking up pollutants, sediment, and nutrients, and transports them to streams, rivers, and lakes. One of these nutrients is phosphorus. Phosphorus is essential to plant growth, which is why it is applied to lawns, gardens and agricultural fields. If too much phosphorus washes off the land and into water bodies, it can cause excessive algae growth. Algal blooms are unsightly, pungent, and potentially dangerous. People often don't want to swim, boat, or fish in this water, which is harmful to local economies that rely on tourism. The algae can also produce toxins that may cause skin rashes, respiratory infections, stomach problems, paralysis, and (in worst cases) death of humans and animals.



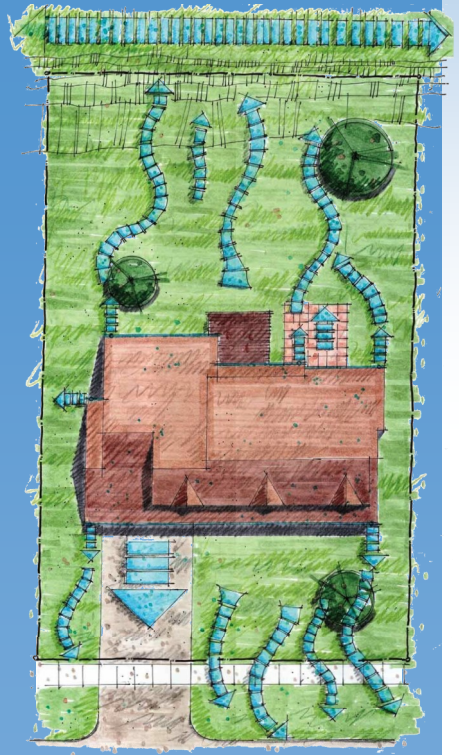
Help reduce stormwater runoff and algae blooms by following simple pollution prevention techniques or by installing rainscaping practices in your yard.

Don't just landscape...

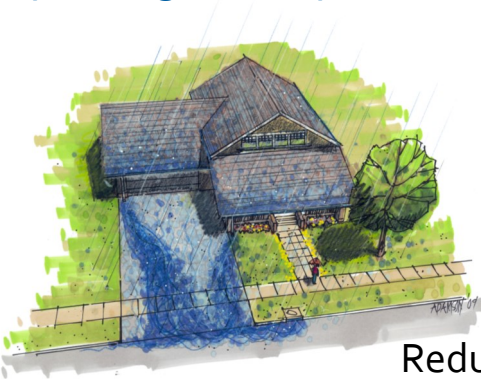
RAINSCAPE!

Rainfall runs off roofs, sidewalks, driveways, streets and compacted lawns. The water then flows into the street, down the storm drain, and through the storm sewer to the nearest stream, river or lake. Along the way it picks up pollutants, such as fertilizer, grass clippings, sediment, pet waste, oil, heavy metals, bacteria and more. Untreated stormwater degrades water quality.

You can help prevent these pollutants from reaching storm drains and streams by incorporating rainscaping practices into your landscape.



Be Aware of Your Hydrologic Footprint



Your hydrologic footprint is the amount of water that leaves your property when it rains. A typical small urban lot receives more than 200,000 gallons of rainwater each year. That's enough to fill 4,000 rain barrels.

Reduce runoff from your property with rainscaping practices.

Install Rainscaping Practices to Reduce Runoff



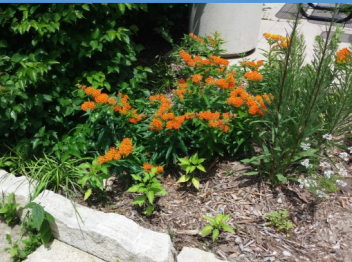
Rain Garden

A rain garden is a landscaped depression that captures rainwater runoff from impervious surfaces, such as roofs or driveways. The runoff is temporarily ponded before seeping down through the soil.



Rainwater Harvesting

A 1,500-square-foot ranch house sheds about 1,000 gallons per inch of rain. Capturing rainwater from your roof can help significantly reduce runoff and provide a free source of water for watering your lawn and garden.



Native Landscaping

Hardy native plants and grasses with deep root systems help restore soil quality over time. This helps landscapes absorb more rainfall and reduces the amount of runoff. Native landscaping attracts songbirds, dragonflies, butterflies and other desirable species.



Permeable Pavement

Roads, parking lots and driveways account for more than 60 percent of impervious surfaces in urban areas and are the largest generators of stormwater runoff. Permeable pavement systems allow water to infiltrate into layers of rock placed below the pavers and then into surrounding soils.



Shoreline Buffers

A strip of vegetation along the shore acts as a buffer zone, intercepting nutrients and reducing runoff, erosion, and sedimentation. Planting grasses and flowering plants that are native to your area will diversify, enhance and protect your shoreline.

Pollution Prevention for Homeowners

DO Protect, DON'T Pollute Wisconsin Waters



Do Protect

1. Keep fertilizers and lawn chemicals on lawns and off pavement.
2. Promptly clean up spills to prevent them from washing into the street and storm drain.
3. Pick up after pets. Pet waste contains bacteria that pollutes water.
4. Take your car to the car wash instead of washing it on your driveway to prevent soapy water runoff from leaving your property and reaching a stream.
5. Sweep up fertilizers and grass clippings from driveways, sidewalks and streets.
6. Fix oil and antifreeze leaks from your car.

Don't Pollute

7. DON'T wash off your driveway into the street where it will reach the stream.
8. DON'T dump oil or any other waste products in a storm drain as it flows to the stream.
9. DON'T dump lawn clippings on stream banks. Leave them on the lawn or bag and compost them.
10. DON'T mow grass clippings into the street. Leave them on the lawn or bag and compost them.

What else can I do?

- Join a local citizen's group involved in water quality protection.
- Work with your community to apply for a grant to help protect your local lakes and waterways. Grants available from the DNR include Lake Planning, Healthy Lakes Initiative, and Urban Nonpoint Sources and Stormwater Management.
- Join [Wisconsin's Citizen-Based Water Monitoring Network](#) [exit DNR] to learn more about Wisconsin's water resources and help improve water quality. Projects can include stream or lake monitoring, aquatic invasive species education, river clean ups, and storm drain stenciling.



Project Partners

An enormous task requires an enormous effort. The Wisconsin River Basin Clean Waterways Project is a partnership between various agencies, local governments, and citizen organizations that aim to achieve water quality goals. Partners include:

- UW-Stevens Point
- UW-Stout
- UW-Extension
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Geological Survey
- Citizen organizations and other resource advocacy groups
- County Land Conservation Departments
- Towns, Cities, and Villages
- Municipal, Industrial, Stormwater and Wastewater Facilities
- Agricultural Organizations
- Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS)



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