



Allegheny County
Conservation District™

Better Backyards for Healthy Streams

Amy Miller-Watershed Specialist

Jonathan Burgess-Senior Agricultural
Conservationist



Water, Water Everywhere



- ô PA has 2nd most number of stream miles in the country
- ô Allegheny County
 - 90.5 miles of rivers (Allegheny, Monongehela, Ohio and Youghiogheny)
 - 2024 miles of streams



Problems for Aquatic Environments



- Eroded Soils
 - Sediment is the #1 Pollutant by volume
- Toxic Chemicals
 - Antifreeze, motor oil, gasoline, solvents and pesticides can weaken or kill organisms and accumulate in the food chain.
- Excess Stormwater Flow
- Nutrients
 - In excess overloads aquatic systems causing algae blooms and fish kills



2 Strategies

- Reduce volume
- Reduce the Amount of Pollutants



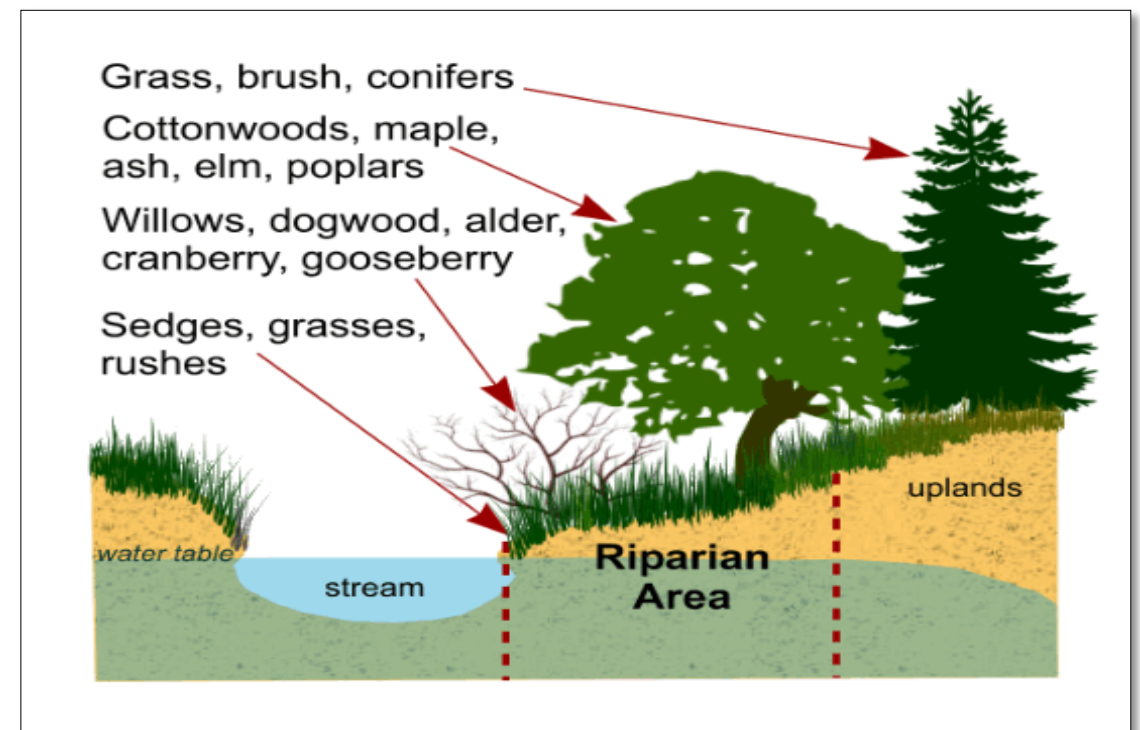
Reducing Runoff

- Eroded Soils

- Leave a buffer!

- Benefits:

- Provides wildlife habitat
- Reduces water pollution
- Protects water supplies
- Minimizes impacts from storms, flooding, and droughts
- Refreshes our air quality
- Provides recreational opportunities
- Provides aesthetic and economic values to the community



Reducing Runoff



Help keep your streams and habitat healthy.

Wash Your Car On The

LAWN

Not the Driveway!



www.MSDLOUKY.org/PROJECTWIN

- Car Maintenance

- Use designated car-washing facilities
- “Biodegradable” Cleansers

- <https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice>



Reducing Runoff



- Car Maintenance
 - Recycle used motor oil
 - Just 1 gal of motor oil can contaminate 1 million gal of water
 - Where?
 - Pennsylvania Resources Council
 - Ms. Joy Smallwood
Recycling Coordinator,
Allegheny County Health Dept.
Div. of Waste Mgmt.
412-578-8390



Reducing Runoff



- Lawn & Garden Watering
 - Properly directed sprinkler instead of hand-held hose
 - Measure application by placing shallow containers within the field of spray



- Water thoroughly and Less often
- Avoid watering sidewalks and streets
- Water Early Morning or Late Evening

Reducing Runoff



- Lawn Practices to Retain/Infiltrate Rain Water
 - Leave Grass Higher & Mow More Frequently
 - Leave Grass Clippings on the Lawn
 - Grass Clippings are 75-85% water and rich in Nitrogen
 - Do NOT throw yard debris into the stream or the street
 - Create Raised Planting Beds
 - Convert your lawn to a mulched landscape area with shrub and tree plantings.



Nutrient Management

- Controlling the flow of nutrients from your yard to surface water sources.
- Understanding the nutrient needs of your trees, flowers, vegetables and turf.
- Being an active participant in maintaining ecosystem health.



Why does it matter?

- Lawns contain large amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus.
- Bound up in plant material as well as attached to soil particles and in soil solution.
- Excessive N and P can cause eutrophic conditions in ponds, lakes, rivers, and streams.
- Too much algae growth and decay uses up O₂ and can kill off aquatic organisms.

Mowing Your Lawn

- Grass clippings contain surprisingly large amounts of N and P.
- One bushel of grass clippings can equal enough Phosphorus to feed 35 lbs of algae.
- Collect clippings and compost or leave in yard.
- Keep grass out of streets, driveways and drains.
- Keep grass at least 2-2 ½" tall to prevent erosion.
- Seed and straw bare areas.



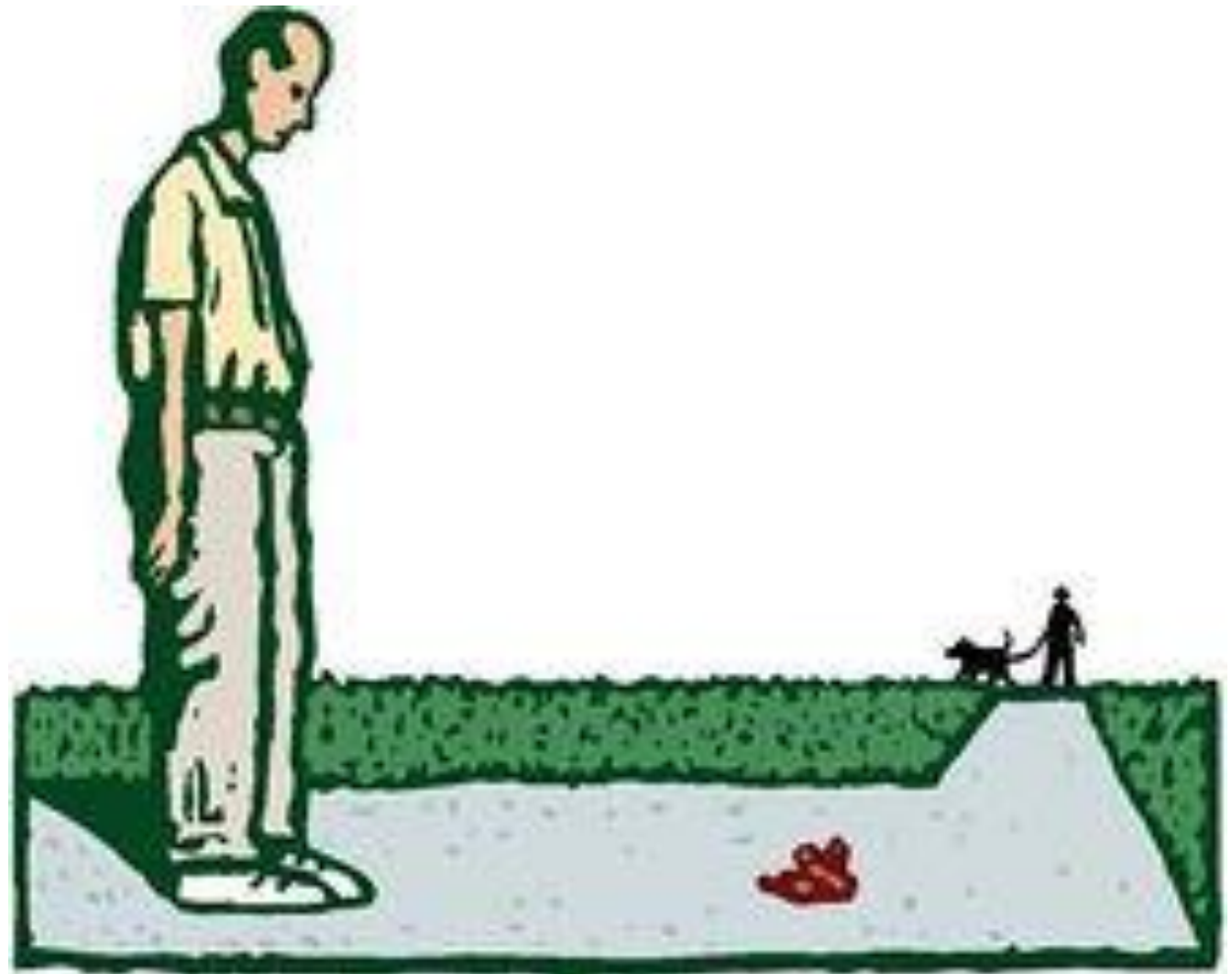
Fertilizer

- Don't over apply: Get a soil test (PSU Ext.) and follow recommendations for adding N-P-K.
- Don't spray or spread fertilizer prior to rain (24-48hrs).
- Don't mow right after application.
- Do rinse out sprayers in lawn.
- Don't pour leftovers into drains, streets, etc.



Manure?

- Manure not just a farm concern.
- Small amounts but..
- Dispose properly and avoid over-accumulation.
- Bare areas worse than lawn.





Allegheny County
Conservation District™

QUESTIONS?





Allegheny County
Conservation District™

Amy Miller | Watershed Program Lead
Allegheny County Conservation District
Riverwalk Corporate Center
33 Terminal Way 325b
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
P: (412) 291-8014

Jonathan Burgess | Senior Agriculture Conservationist
Allegheny County Conservation District
Riverwalk Corporate Center
33 Terminal Way 325b
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
P: (412)291-8017

