

## Wise Up About Water

By: Kathy Luther, Northwestern  
Indiana Regional Planning Commission.

Remember

Only Rain  
in the Drain!!!

### Water, Water Everywhere!

If you read the water conservation hints in this column last month, right now you might be thinking, clearly we have TOO much water. You may recall that in June, I commented on our good fortune to have escaped the flooding in other parts of the state. This time we weren't so lucky, but is it all luck?

There are many reasons why flooding happens. Rainfall is one that is out of our control. We can't order the rain when and where we need it. But just as there are things we can do to save water for the dry times, there are also things we can all do to help reduce floods.

Look around your neighborhood at the different surfaces. Roofs, driveways, and patios are all *impervious*. Rain falling on them can't soak in, so it has to flow somewhere. Usually it "disappears" into storm drains and sewers. During major storms, these fill up and the water can only stay on the road or flow back into our homes. Grass, gardens, and woodlots, are *pervious*. They absorb rainfall, slow the flow and release it to the environment gradually. Every time a pervious surface is replaced with an impervious one through the addition of a shed, patio or another traffic lane, less water soaks in and more goes into the streets and sewers.

#### Things you can do at home:

- ☛ Install a rain barrel to catch runoff from your roof before it hits the street.
- ☛ Plant a rain garden to filter and store stormwater.
- ☛ Trade turf for prairie plants, they have higher absorption capacity.
- ☛ Look for pervious alternatives to concrete and asphalt in your home landscape.

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For more information go to:

[www.nirpc.org/environment/water.htm](http://www.nirpc.org/environment/water.htm)

10/23/08

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### Falling leaves bring water quality concerns.

Autumn has arrived with its cool crisp nights, bright days, and falling leaves. Did you know that tree leaves are a source of phosphorus, the nutrient that turns lakes and wetlands green with algae?

In natural settings, phosphorus in fallen leaves is recycled back into the soil when the leaves decompose. But in cities and towns, where much of the land is paved, tree leaves that fall or are raked into the street release phosphorus into runoff from rain. The rain then carries the phosphorus to surface waters through the storm sewer.

Keeping our streets clean is important for keeping our lakes clean. Excessive algae growth looks bad, smells bad, and makes fishing, swimming and boating unpleasant.

Following are some simple steps residents can take to reduce the runoff of phosphorus that spurs algae growth:

#### Things you can do at home:

- ✿ Rake or sweep leaves out of your street and away from storm drains. This also keeps the drains from clogging during fall storms.
- ✿ Compost leaves and grass clippings in your yard if possible. Save money on the bags of phosphorus fertilizer you won't need to buy!
- ✿ If you can't use the leaves at home and your town doesn't pick them up, take them to a yard waste collection site -- never dispose of in lakes, wetlands or buffer areas.
- ✿ Keep the street clean of other materials that contain phosphorus, such as grass clippings and eroded soil.

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### Getting Ready for Winter.

Winter is on its way. If winterizing your vehicle is on your "To Do" list, now is an excellent time to make sure that your car is not causing to local water pollution. Check and fix any leaks you find. Even a small amount of oil or antifreeze that drips on the pavement can pollute thousands of gallons of water.

Drip pans, carpet scraps, and mats can help trap leaking fluids instead of letting them land on your driveway. If you do drip or spill liquids, don't hose off the stuff. Instead absorb it! You can use cat litter, peat moss, paper towel, newspaper, or sawdust. Sweep the mess into a plastic bag and take it to a household hazardous waste day.

Never dump used oil, gasoline, or other vehicle fluids in storm inlets or on the ground. Eventually, it will reach our streams, rivers, and even Lake Michigan. Collect and dispose of it safely. Some local auto parts stores will accept it, or save it for household hazardous waste collections.

#### Things you can do at home:

- \* Check for and fix any fluid leaks.
- \* Capture antifreeze, oil, and other automotive fluids and properly dispose of them.
- \* You can take your used antifreeze and oil to the Lake Michigan Districts Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event nearest you. Check out there website in the spring for the 2009 schedule.  
[www.solidwastedistrict.com/programs/hazardous.html](http://www.solidwastedistrict.com/programs/hazardous.html)
- \* Clean up any drips or spills quickly with available dry material such as cat litter, peat moss, newspaper, or sawdust that can absorb the liquid. Do not hose spills down the drain or to the street.

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International (BNI), 7 to 8:30 a.m. each Tuesday, Round-the-Clock Restaurant, 1607 S. Calumet Road, Chesterton, reservations recommended, 926-2505

■ **Calumet Corner Chorus of Sweet Adelines International**, 7 p.m. each Thursday, Christian Fellowship Church, 605 165th St., Hammond, 365-0160

■ **Calumet Stamp Club**, 7 p.m. each Wednesday, Hammond Civic Center, 5825 Sohl Ave., southwest corner, lower level entrance, doors open at 6:30, 662-1296

■ **Chess Club for Adults**, 6:30 to 11 p.m. each Tuesday, Meijer Cafe, 10138 Indianapolis Blvd., Highland, sets provided, bring chess clocks, 845-1376

■ **Chesterton Writers' Group**, 3 to 5 p.m. each Saturday, Books Alive, 205 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton, 926-4711

■ **Chorus of the Dunes, Barbershop Harmony Society**, 7 p.m. each Tuesday, Pierce Middle School, 199 E. 70th Place, Merrillville, 838-6332

■ **County Line Leads Club**, 12:15 p.m. each Wednesday, Impressions Cafe, 10859 Randolph St., Winfield, referral-based marketing club, R.S.V.P. to attend, 405-4519

■ **Dive Quest Scuba Club**, 7 p.m., first Wednesday each month, Valparaiso Public Library, 103 Jefferson St., Valparaiso, visit [www.divequestscuba.org](http://www.divequestscuba.org)

■ **Disabled American Veterans**, 7 p.m., third Tuesday each month, Moose Lodge 260, 1200 N. Indiana, Crown Point, 365-8629

■ **Duneland Business and Professionals Network**, 7:30 a.m., second Wednesday each month, Miller's Assisted Living, 5911 Lute Road, Portage, educational and networking meetings for business professionals, 764-0628 or visit [www.dunelandbnp.com](http://www.dunelandbnp.com)

■ **Duneland chapter of the International Plastic Modelers Society**, 7 p.m., first and third Saturdays each month, Porter United Methodist Church, 100 Beam St., Porter, 926-9132 or 928-6868


■ **Duneland Chess Club**, 6 to 9 p.m. each Friday, Bertha Wood meeting room, Thomas Library, 200 W. Indiana Ave., a working knowledge of chess is necessary, for those who have finished middle school through adults, free, 926-7696

■ **Duneland Woodcarvers**, 9 to 11 a.m. each Tuesday, Woodland Park, 2100 Willowcreek Road,

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### Winter Water Needs Help Too.

Winter has definitely arrived, covering our driveways and walks with snow and ice. Besides shoveling or blowing snow, we usually sprinkle material on the ground to take care of the ice. Remember that if it goes on the ground, it ends up in the water. It's not too late to think about environmentally friendly ways to control ice. There are two ways we "manage" ice, traction agents and deicers.

Traction agents help prevent slipping on ice, but don't melt it. Sand, kitty litter, and ashes are all used, but can hurt vegetation, clog sewers and degrade streams. A better alternative is cracked corn, available where birdseed and feed are sold. Wildlife and birds can eat the corn before it ends up washed into the storm sewers during a melting event. For safety use caution not to put this in high traffic areas.

Deicers melt snow and ice. When applied as soon as the snowy or icy conditions appear, they are "Anti-icers" preventing a bond from forming between the pavement and the ice, making shoveling easier and reducing the amount needed. Here are different kinds:

- \* **Sodium Chloride** (rock salt) is the most common because it works and is cheap. Unfortunately, it is also very corrosive and ecologically damaging.
- \* **Calcium Chloride** works better than rock salt. It is more expensive than rock salt, but since it works better you don't have to use as much. Using less means less to pollute our waterways.
- \* **Magnesium chloride** is a lot like calcium chloride, but it is less than half as effective as rock salt, you end up having to use twice as much.
- \* **Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA)** is less damaging for soil, plants, and water. It is non-corrosive, made from corn or oil and converts ice into oatmeal-like mush.
- \* **Corn-based liquid concentrates** are emerging as a new environmentally friendly solution, but may only be available on-line.

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■ **South Shore Brass Band concert**, 6 p.m. Saturday, Coffee Creek Amphitheater, County Road 1050 North and Dickinson Road, Chesterton, refreshments will not be available for sale, picnics and outside food items encouraged, free, 395-5300

■ **South Shore Summer Music Festival with the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra**, 7 p.m. Saturday, Franciscan Communities, 205 Franciscan Drive, Crown Point; rain location Crown Point High School, 1500 S. Main St., bring seating, free, 836-0525

■ **Dinner concert with J. Jay Brook**, 5:30 p.m. Monday, Rensselaer Senior Center, 967 E. Leopold St., \$6 per person, 987-7909, 866-8071

■ **Wolfgang**, 6:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, as part of the Summer Music in the Park series, Woodland Park, 2100 Willowcreek Road, Portage, free, 762-1675, 762-3300

■ **Pipe Organ music**, 12:15 p.m. Wednesday, First Congregational Church, 215 W. 6th St., Michigan City, performance by Mark Sudeith on the historic 1891 Roosevelt Pipe Organ, 778-9802

■ **Tribute to The Beatles**, 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 16, Blue Room Cafe, 5246 Hohman Ave., Hammond, music by Bunk Johnson, Joshua McCormack, Brice Woodall, The Lovetones, John Vezmar and The Dreamers and Nomad Planets, beer garden and refreshments available, \$10 in advance, \$12 at the gate, proceeds benefit Haven House, 933-8124

■ **The Platters**, 8 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 31, during the Labor Day Festival, Washington Park, Guy Foreman Amphitheater, 115 Lakeshore Drive, Michigan City, \$10 for lawn seats, \$20 VIP seating, the Harbor Lights perform at 6:30, [www.michigancityfestivalsinc.com](http://www.michigancityfestivalsinc.com)

## TAKE A TRIP

■ **Chicago Botanic Gardens**, 10 a.m. departure, 3 p.m. return Wednesday, Aug. 20, from Advance Financial, 31 W. Lincoln Highway, Schererville, \$40 for AFCU Better than 50 Club members, \$45 nonmember family or friends, reservation deadline Wednesday, Aug. 6, 392-3946

■ **Blues Ensemble Theatre**, Chicago, 7 p.m. departure

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Summer is starting to heat up, you may be thinking about watering your yard as rain gets a scarcer. Did you know that your lawn watering practices can make a difference in the local water quality? Over watering can harm your lawn and the environment.

Your lawn usually needs just one inch of water per week. Watering once per week, maybe twice when the temperature is over 80° is plenty. Excess water runs off into streets and storm drains carrying pollution into our streams. So, saving water can save you money and prevent pollution.

To Water Wisely try the following:

- ☞ Use a rain gauge to measure when an inch has hit the grass.
- ☞ Improve your aim, adjust sprinklers so you are only watering plants, not the driveway, sidewalk, or street.
- ☞ Improve your aim, adjust sprinklers so you are only watering plants, not the driveway, sidewalk, or street.
- ☞ Avoid watering in the heat of the day.
- ☞ Mow high...3 inch grass is best.

Stay tuned for next month's "Wise Up About Water" and

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