



The Grass is not always Greener on the other side... of the Stormdrain

Page 1

NPDES HOT TOPIC

January 2011



Why are grass clippings harmful to stormwater?

Yard waste → contributes nutrients *such as nitrogen and phosphorous* → which causes unwanted and uncontrolled growth of **algae** and **aquatic weeds**!



What is Pond Algae?

There are different types of algae that can cause a problem in ponds. Apart from looking unsightly, algae can lead to the deoxygenation of water with a detrimental effect on pond life.



Quiz time

Which are more harmful to the stormdrain system oil or grass clippings ?



Take your best guess, answer is on page: 3

Why should I care?

Everyone should be concerned about storm water quality because what we put down the stormdrain will eventually end up in places like Lake Tohopekaliga, East Lake Tohopekaliga, Alligator Lake, and a lake near you.



Lake Tohopekaliga

Alligator Lake



Which are more harmful to the storm drain oil or grass clippings ?

If you guessed **GRASS CLIPPINGS** you were right!

Why?

If you were to pour a quart of oil and a bag of grass clipping down the storm drain at the same time clearly the oil would be the most harmful to stormwater.

However, most people know not to pour oil down the storm drain but don't think twice about hosing/sweeping their yard waste down the storm drain. And when you examine the overall cumulative effect of thousands of people sending their grass clippings down the storm drain versus the few who put oil down the drain it becomes one of the **top pollutants** of stormwater.

What are you going to do with all your grass clippings?



- **Leave them on your lawn**
As the grass clippings decompose, they will provide a source of nitrogen for your lawn, reducing your fertilizer needs and saving you money.
- **Bag and remove those grass clippings.**
Try composting them! Compost provides nutrients and organic matter to improve your soil. Compost is great for the garden, but can also be used as mulch around trees, shrubs and other plantings.
- **Don't forget to sweep up!**
Grass clippings left in the road or on the driveway will wash away in the next rain. Runoff will move the grass clippings into the storm drain where they will be delivered to the nearest stream, lake.

Grass clippings are great for your yard, but they damage our waterways, fueling weed and algae growth. So keep yard waste at home and put it to work for you.