

The Problem



Grass clippings



Leaf piles

Did You Know? It is against most city codes to dump leaves and clippings?

What You Need to Do

Call your hauler to take clippings & leaves
OR

Take them to a **County Compost Site**

Bunker Hills
763.767.7964

Rice Creek
651.429.3723

Open April through November
Cost = \$4 up to 4 cubic yards

OR



Mulch

Save time, effort,
and money

Leave clippings on
your lawn as you mow
so the nutrients can get
to roots

Free Fertilizer!

1 season clippings ~1 fertilizer application

Photo Credits

Coon Creek Watershed District staff
www.cleanwatermn.org

WATER IQ #14

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Coon Creek Watershed District

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www.cooncreekwd.org

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Mission

To manage groundwater and surface water drainage systems to prevent property damage, maintain hydrologic balance, and protect water quality for the safety and enjoyment of citizens, and the preservation and enhancement of wildlife habitat.

Coon Creek Watershed District

Water IQ #14

Lawn Clippings and Leaves



Fourteenth in a Water Information
Quest (WIQ) Series by
Coon Creek Watershed District

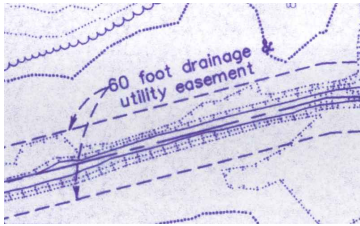
Tel: 763.755.0975

Ditch Easements

The creek along your property may actually be a drainage ditch dug almost 100 years ago.

Drainage ditches need periodic maintenance that requires inspection and possible repair. Otherwise flow can get obstructed, possibly causing flooding. (Or, pollution can enter and get carried downstream.)

Therefore, early in ditch law history, easements were established for monitoring, inspection & repair of the channel and spoil banks. These easements allow access rights, while ownership is retained by the landowner (fee title).



All public ditches have ditch easements held by a drainage authority. Since its establishment in 1959, Coon Creek Watershed District (District) has had responsibility for all 125 miles of public ditches plus issues like erosion and wetland conservation within the District. Private ditches are privately owned and are therefore the responsibility of the landowner.

In 1988, a new Rule provided specific sizes for ditch easements within all new plats.

The Need for Access

Be aware that the District may need access to the creek/ditch for monitoring, inspection, or repair which may require use of heavy equipment by our contractor. While the District may not want to remove trees along banks, it may need, and has the right, to remove them if they are obstructing access. It may be best to plant trees and shrubs where they won't obstruct the ditch or its repair; instead, consider keeping the banks in long-rooted native grasses or flowers for erosion control.

Vegetative Buffers

Strips of natural vegetation between different land uses are often called buffer strips. They are usually found along ditches, streams, and ponds. Buffer strips should be left unmowed or undisturbed to function better.

Effectiveness

If designed as filter strips (on small slopes, for example), buffer strips help remove sediment, nitrogen and phosphorous, all of which can degrade water quality. Studies done in agricultural areas, where buffers were originally used, have shown:

- A 15-foot wide buffer can achieve a 50% removal rate of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and sediment
- In urban areas, studies suggest a removal rate of 35% sediment & 40% nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous) minimum.

Benefits

Vegetative Buffers can

- Remove pollutants from stormwater
- Reduce erosion & sediment from entering waterbodies
- Stabilize streambanks
- Provide infiltration of stormwater runoff
- Maintain base flows of streams
- Contribute food & energy to aquatic systems
- Give shade to streams for desirable wildlife
- Provide scenic value

The Problem

Piles of grass clippings can block small ditches and also contain phosphorus (P), a major pollutant of our streams and lakes.

One extra pound of "P" added to a lake can produce up to 300 pounds of algae.

Why?

Phosphorous feeds the algae. Then, too much algae can block sunlight for other aquatic life. And, when the algae dies, its decay uses up oxygen an issue for other aquatic life, including fish.

Plus...

...pockets in the piles can collect water that stays long enough for mosquitoes to breed in them. And, piles of clippings do not quickly decompose. Organic debris can add other excess nutrients to our waters.



What You Can Do

Remove clipping piles immediately.

Have your hauler take them, or

Take to County compost site at

Bunker Hills or

Rice Creek Chain of Lakes

Open April through November

Questions? 763.323.5734

