



# Lawn to Lake

Healthy Landscapes, Healthy Lakes

**Sarah Neville**  
**Safer Pest Control Project**



# GOAL

To reduce inputs of pesticides, nutrients, and other pollutants into the Great Lakes basin by promoting and implementing sustainable lawn and landscape practices at the community and household levels.

# The Facts



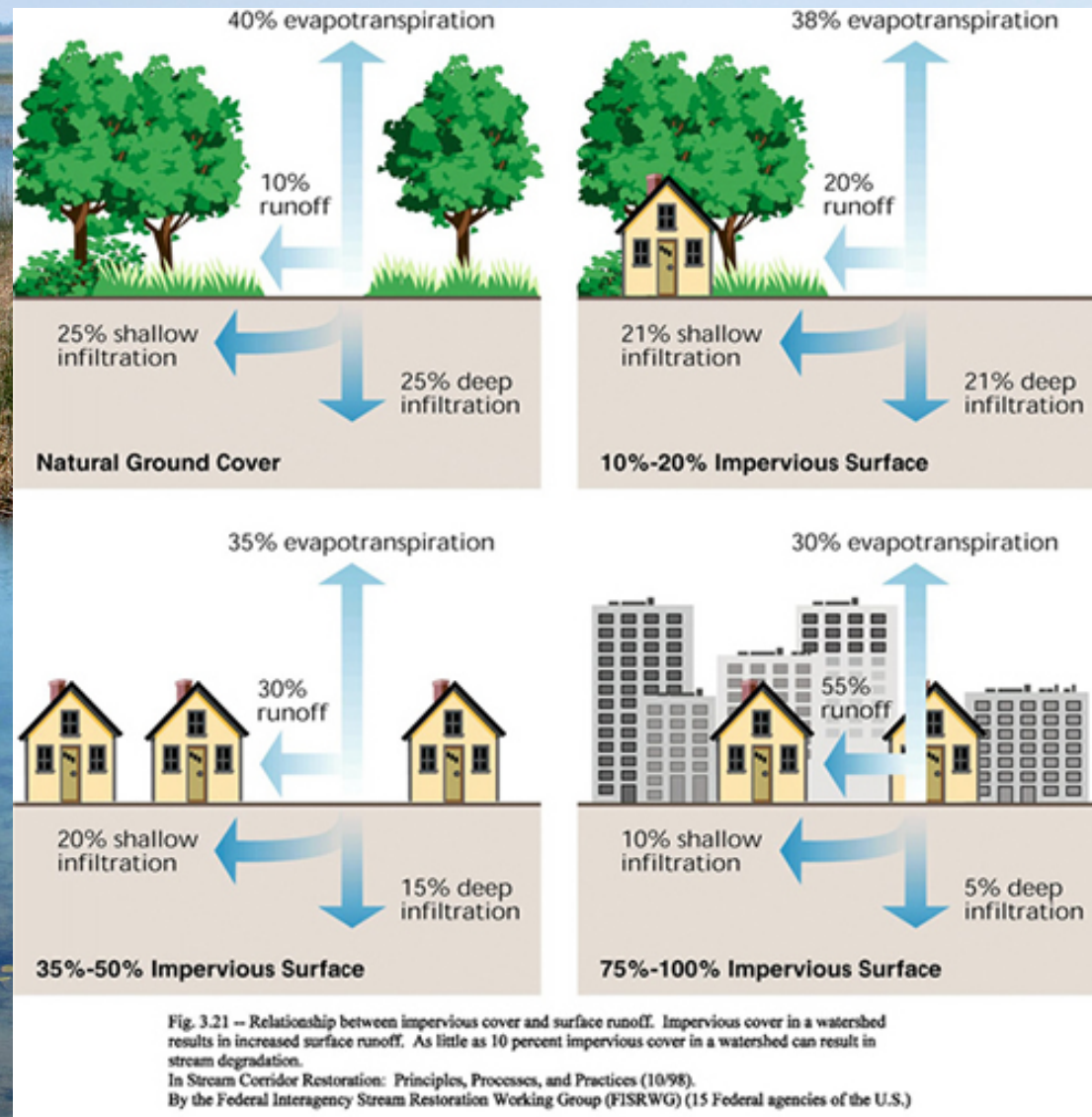
**Americans Use  
3 to 6 Million Tons  
of Fertilizer on their  
Lawns Each Year**



**70 Million Pounds**



# The Problems



Quality





Human Health

through Health



**Pets & Wildlife**

**pets & wildlife**

**Our Work**

# Strategic Approach

- Clearly defines the link between individual behavior and lake and watershed water quality;
- Uses existing, off the shelf, proven outreach and education strategies developed locally;
- Is community based, and relies on partnerships for sustainable effort beyond the project scope;
- Leverages outreach effort by focusing on key target audiences, including Master Gardener and Master Naturalists who will multiply the investment made by Sea Grant/EPA;
- Is outcome oriented – measurably reducing inputs and changing behavior.

# Target Audiences

- Professionals & municipalities
- Train the trainer
  - Master Gardener
  - Teachers
- Schools
- Homeowners
- Pilot Grounds Care Program
- Retailers



# Professionals & Municipalities



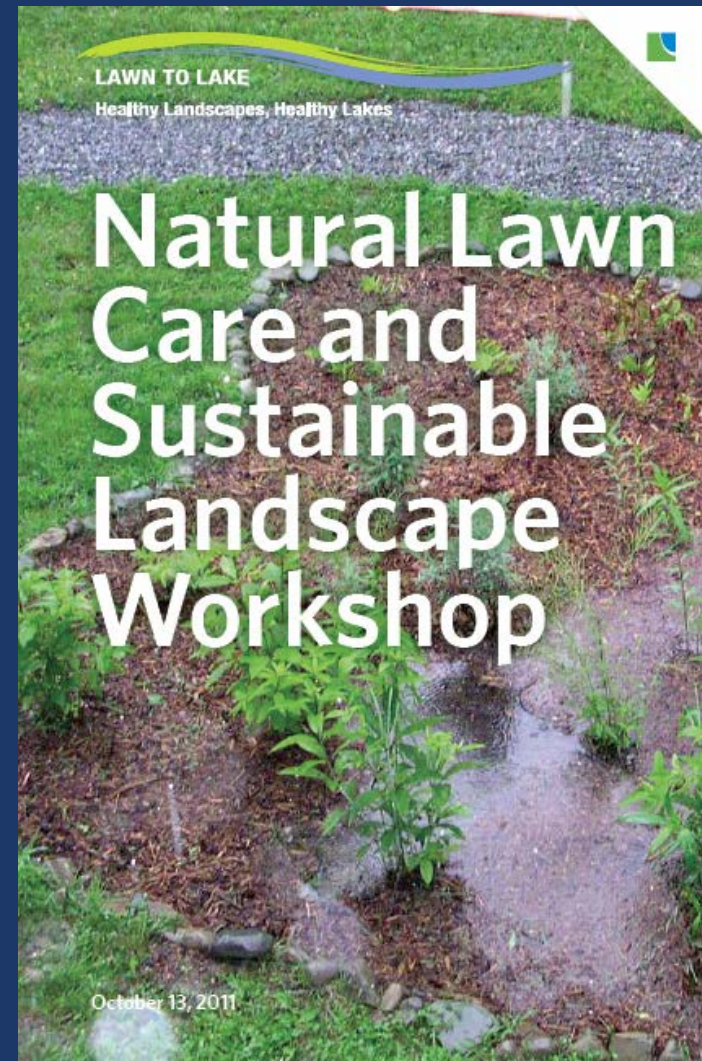
Lawn and garden chemicals applied in the Lake Michigan basin can wind up in the water, polluting the lakes with pesticides and excess fertilizer. But it's easy to adopt healthy landscape practices by following these simple steps:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>BUILD YOUR SOIL</b><br/><i>Compost improves soil's health</i></li></ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>NATURAL LAWN CARE</b><br/><i>Mow high, leave clippings, core aerate</i></li></ul>                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>SHRINK YOUR LAWN</b><br/><i>Reduce lawn area when lawn isn't necessary</i></li></ul>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>LET THE RAIN SOAK IN</b><br/><i>Capture rainwater with rain gardens, cisterns and rain barrels</i></li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>RIGHT PLANT, RIGHT PLACE</b><br/><i>Choose appropriate plants for your site</i></li></ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>WATER SENSIBLY</b><br/><i>Reduce watering requirements of the lawn and landscape</i></li></ul>               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>LET NATURE DO THE WORK</b><br/><i>Use natural organic fertilizers</i></li></ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>SAVE TIME AND MONEY</b><br/><i>Reduce inputs to reduce costs</i></li></ul>                                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>TEST YOUR SOIL</b><br/><i>Soil test tells if adequate nutrients are available for plant growth</i></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>MANAGE PESTS SENSIBLY</b><br/><i>Correct the underlying problem prior to applying pesticides</i></li></ul>   |

Lawn to Lake is a collaborative program to protect water resources in the Great Lakes region by promoting healthy landscape practices. With funding from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, partners are coordinating a pollution prevention campaign addressing the needs of those responsible for lawn and landscape care.

For more information, visit <http://www.lawntolake.org/GreatLakes/> or contact Margaret Schneemann at [MSchneemann@cmsn.illinois.gov](mailto:MSchneemann@cmsn.illinois.gov) or 312.676.7456.

Great Lakes  
RESTORATION



# Train-the-Trainer





# Demonstration Sites

- Conduct Spring and Fall soil tests.
- Mow lawn 3-4" in height.
- Leave lawn clippings on the lawn.
- Do not compact soils by driving heavy machinery or vehicles on lawn. Aerate if necessary.
- Utilize natural, sustainable alternatives to address pest and disease issues as they arise.





# Retailers

## DON'T "P" ON YOUR LAWN!



Phosphorus (P) is a nutrient found in many fertilizers that feeds algal blooms in waterways. Switch to "P-free" fertilizers and follow these tips for healthy lawns and lakes...



Algae Bloom

LAWN TO LAKE  
LAWN CARE TIPS FOR GREEN LAWNS

## HEALTHY LAWN TIPS for green lawns *not* green lakes!

**TAKE A SOIL TEST...** if you are seeding a new lawn, or want to learn more about your lawn's nutrient content, pH level and organic content.

**FERTILIZE...** only with phosphorus-free fertilizers. Most Indiana lawns have enough phosphorus (P) and only need nitrogen (N)! The best time to fertilize is spring and fall. Your soil test results will determine your fertilizer needs. Sweep up fertilizer from sidewalks and driveways, and don't fertilize before heavy rain.

**WATER...** if desired, in early morning, when there is less than one inch of rain per week. During droughts, grass will survive without watering by going dormant.

**PLANT GRASS SEED...** on existing lawns at least once a year with a mix of grass seed and compost. Use a grass mixture that does well in the setting (soil, light, activity). Leave legumes, such as common white clover, in the grass to add nitrogen, which will naturally fertilize your lawn.

**MOW...** to maintain a height of 3 to 4 inches and cut off no more than 1/3 of grassblade. Leave clippings on lawn to add nutrients and organic matter, but be sure to sweep the clippings off pavement.

**WEEDS...** will be discouraged by using these tips! Pull any weeds that grow by hand.

[www.lawntolake.org](http://www.lawntolake.org)

The Great Lakes "Lawn to Lake" Partners: Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, University of Illinois-Springfield, Better Lawn Systems, NorthCentral Indiana Regional Planning Council, University of Illinois-Chicago, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Lake Champlain Basin Board



IISC-11-20

## DON'T "P" ON YOUR LAWN!



Phosphorus (P) is a nutrient found in many fertilizers that feeds algae blooms in lakes. Switch to "P-free" fertilizers and follow these easy tips for healthy lawns and lakes...

### HEALTHY LAWN TIPS for green lawns *not* green lakes!

- **TAKE A SOIL TEST...** if you are seeding a new lawn, at least to learn more about your lawn's nutrient content, pH level, and organic content.
- **FERTILIZE...** only with phosphorus-free fertilizers. Most Indiana and Illinois lawns have enough P and only need nitrogen (N). The best time to fertilize is spring and fall. Your soil test results will determine your fertilizer needs. Sweep up fertilizer from sidewalks and driveways, and don't fertilize before heavy rain.
- **WATER...** if desired, in early morning, when there is less than one inch of rain per week. During droughts, grass will survive without watering by going dormant.
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2011-12

## We sell "P-free" lake-friendly lawn care products!

Don't "P" on Your Lawn! Phosphorus (P) is a nutrient found in many fertilizers that feeds algae blooms in lakes.

Switch to P-free fertilizers and pick up a "Healthy Lawn Tips" brochure here.



**LOOK FOR THE ZERO!**  
The three numbers on fertilizer bags show the nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium (N-P-K) nutrient content. A "zero" in the middle means it is phosphorus-free. Most labels and bags have only one digit change to be healthy!

[WWW.LAWNTOLAKE.ORG](http://WWW.LAWNTOLAKE.ORG)  
LAWN TO LAKE  
LAWN CARE TIPS FOR GREEN LAWNS

### LAWN TO LAKE Healthy Lawns, Healthy Lakes

**How can I determine if a product is phosphorus-free (P-free)?**  
All fertilizer bags show three full or partial phosphorus-potassium numbers listed in a series of numbers such as 10-10-10. The middle number is the phosphorus content. A "zero" in the middle means it is phosphorus-free.

**How do I benefit as a retailer?**  
As lawn care becomes aware of the benefits of healthy lawns, you can position your store as a national leader of the industry regarding top water quality. Lawn to Lake will provide you with brochures, posters, and other promotional products to help you promote the benefits of your natural lawn care and landscaping products. If you already sell these products, we will provide you with a sign that will help you promote the benefits of your products to your customers.

**How can I benefit as a customer?**  
Lawn care products that contain phosphorus can feed algae blooms in lakes, streams, and rivers. Phosphorus can also run off the lawn and into the water. Phosphorus can also run off the lawn and into the water. Phosphorus can also run off the lawn and into the water. Phosphorus can also run off the lawn and into the water.

**How can I help my fellow retailers as a retailer?**  
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LAWN TO LAKE  
LAWN CARE TIPS FOR GREEN LAWNS

# Web Presence

## Website

The screenshot shows the website header with the IISG logo and navigation menu. The main content area features a 'LAWN TO LAKE' title and a brief description of the program. Below this are three columns: 'Why Lawn to Lake?' with a photo of a lake, 'Materials and Resources' with a photo of a brochure, and 'Store Directory' with a photo of a store display. A 'Latest News' section is on the right, followed by contact information for Margaret Schneemann and Leslie Dorworth, and a list of topics.

ILLINOIS INDIANA SEA GRANT

HOME TOPICS RESEARCH EDUCATION PRODUCTS FUNDING FELLOWSHIPS BLOG

Newsroom Our Other Web Sites Be a Friend NOAA Great Lakes Forecasts About Us Staff

### LAWN TO LAKE

Lawn to Lake is a program that provides information about how to maintain natural, healthy lawns and landscapes without compromising the quality of local waters. The best way we have of reaching people who use lawn products is through retail outlets. As a business that sells lawn products, you are in a key position to promote healthy lawn care.

#### Why Lawn to Lake?

#### Materials and Resources

#### Store Directory

#### Latest News

Natural lawn care summit brings in experts

Get the latest Lawn to Lakes publi

#### Contacts

Margaret Schneemann  
Water Resource Economist  
312-676-7456  
mschneemann@cmap.illinois.gov

Leslie Dorworth  
Aquatic Ecology Specialist  
219-989-2726  
dorworth@calumet.purdue.edu

#### Topics

- Aquaculture
- Aquatic Invasive Species
- Climate Change
- Coastal Restoration
- Fish Consumption
- Getting Rid of Stuff
- Great Lakes Health
- Land Use Planning
- Water Supply
- Water Quality

## Twitter & Facebook

The image shows the Twitter and Facebook profile information for Lawn to Lake. It includes the logo, the name 'Lawn to Lake', the handle '@LawntoLake', a bio describing the project's focus on reducing pesticides, and the location 'United States'.

### LAWN TO LAKE

## Lawn to Lake

@LawntoLake

Lawn to Lake is a project focused on reducing the amount of pesticides that enter the Great Lakes and other waterways through lawn care practices.

United States

The image shows a large banner with the 'LAWN TO LAKE' logo on the left and the text 'Lawn to Lake' on the right, set against a green background.

# LAWN TO LAKE

## Lawn to Lake

## Blog Posts

The screenshot shows a blog post dated 3/15/12. The title is 'IISG's Lawn to Lake program gearing up for spring'. The text describes the program's focus on helping homeowners and landscapers adopt practices that reduce chemical runoff. A second paragraph starts with 'There are a number of ways that everyone can keep local waterways clean while keeping their lawns green...'.

3/15/12

### IISG's Lawn to Lake program gearing up for spring

IISG's **Lawn to Lake** Program is focused on helping homeowners, landscapers, gardeners, and others adopt landscaping practices that reduce chemical runoff to local waterways, protecting and preserving those sources of water while maintaining thriving lawns and gardens.

There are a number of ways that everyone can keep local waterways clean while keeping their lawns green, and IISG has developed materials for homeowners, landscapers, and others to learn about how they can get involved.

## Interactive Tools

The image shows a map of the Great Lakes region with numerous red pins indicating locations. The map covers areas from Beloit, WI to Kenosha, WI, and from Sterling, IL to Merrillville, IN, with major cities like Rockford, Chicago, and Hammond also labeled.

# Estimated Environmental Impacts

- National average lawn size of 0.20 acres
- 5% reduction due to households who stop using weed and feed products completely and 50% reduction for households who continue to use weed and feed but at a lower rate.
- Estimated annual loadings reductions:
  - Calculations assume average pesticide content of 0.8%, so the actual pesticide/ application rate (at the minimum 140 lbs/acre single application rate for the weed and feed) is 1.12 lbs of pesticide/acre/application.
  - $P_2O_5$  (Phosphate) use reduction estimates based on  $P_2O_5$  in a typical weed and feed product at 5%  $P_2O_5$ , that comes out to 15 lbs.  $P_2O_5$ /per acre for two applications yearly.

## Program Goal: Landscape Professionals & Municipalities

	Outreach Metric	Direct Audience Impact	Residents Reached	Lawn Acres Impacted	Estimated Loadings Reduction
Landscape Professionals & Municipalities	5 workshops	330	87,450	17,490	Weed & Feed Reduction: 2,361,150 lbs/yr Associated Pesticide Reduction: 17,709 lbs/yr Associated Phosphate Reduction: 118,058 lbs/yr

## Progress: Landscape Professionals & Municipalities

Major Milestone	Estimated Date	Revised Date	Percent Complete	Work Accomplished
1 Workshop (IL)	Sept. 2010	Nov. 2010	100%	Direct Audience: 88 attendees Residents Reached: 22,525 residents Lawn Acres Impacted: 4,505 acres <b>Estimated Loading Reductions</b> Weed & Feed: 608,175 lbs/yr Associated Pesticide Reduction: 4,561.31 lbs/yr Associated Phosphate Reduction: 30,408.75 lbs/yr

# Program Progress

- **Direct Audience Reached: 200**
- **Master Gardeners Reached: 131**
- **Teachers Reached: 20**
- **Residents Reached: 57,651**
- **Lawn Acres Impacted: 17,527 acres**
- **Weed & Feed Use Reduction: 1,609,983 lbs/yr**
- **Associated Pesticide Reduction: 120,073.31 lbs/yr**
- **Associated Phosphate Reduction: 80,484.75 lbs/yr**

