

Scan for more phosphorus materials!



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## > What is Phosphorus?

Phosphorus is a naturally occurring element found in rocks and necessary for plant growth, but too much of it in our lakes and streams can cause fish kills and algal blooms. As a result, waters lose both their biological and aesthetic quality. High phosphorus levels can also overwhelm the equipment at our Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs).

## > Where Does Excess Phosphorus Come From?

Phosphorus enters our waterways from point and nonpoint sources, such as...



### Point Sources

- Treatment plants
- Municipal discharges
- Industrial facilities



### Nonpoint Sources

- Fertilizer & cleaning products
- Leaf litter
- Streambank erosion

## > How is Phosphorus Impacting Communities?

All National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permittees must monitor and reduce pollutants of concern. Additionally, per the NPDES Special Conditions, Illinois EPA requires POTWs upstream from phosphorus-impaired water bodies to have a Nutrient Assessment Reduction Plan (NARP). Many rivers in Illinois, including the Des Plaines, are on the Illinois 303(d) List or have a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for phosphorus or phosphorus-related impairments. Check out the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission and the Des Plaines River Watershed Workgroup (DRWW) for NPDES and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permit resources!

## > How is DRWW Taking Action?

To comply with the NPDES Special Conditions, the DRWW submitted its NARP to address phosphorus to the Illinois EPA in December 2023. This plan includes water quality goals, phosphorus load reduction targets, and phosphorus-reducing projects. DRWW also continues to sample for Total Phosphorus and Dissolved Reactive Phosphorus five times a year at each of its 73 monitoring locations.

## > How Can You Help?

### Industrial Tips

1. Never dump waste or flush spills into storm sewers or drains.
2. Ensure storm drains are routinely cleaned of debris.
3. Create a street and parking lot sweeping program.



(Scan QR code for examples)

### Residential Tips

1. Minimize or eliminate fertilizer use; native plants don't require any fertilizer to flourish.
2. Always pick up your pet's waste.
3. Wash your car at a car wash instead of at home.

