



## Can we Help Prevent Dead Zones in the DuPage River?

Did you know that lawn fertilizers contain a mix of nutrients, including nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. Rainwater runoff from lawns treated with fertilizers flow into storm drain systems and then into lakes and rivers where phosphorus can stimulate excessive algae growth. Decaying algae can deplete the oxygen levels in the water. Low oxygen levels can kill aquatic river life.

A report provided by the River Prairie Group shows that phosphorus levels in the West Branch of the DuPage River are more than double the Illinois EPA guidelines for impairment. While phosphorus in lawn fertilizer is not the only source of increased levels of phosphorus in surface water, its elimination is one step in controlling these levels.

Putting into perspective the DuPage River's role in a global context, the DuPage River flows south to its confluence with the Des Plaines River in Channahon, and in turn empties into the Illinois River, which empties into the Mississippi River, which empties into the Gulf of Mexico.

Since plants do not absorb more phosphorus than they can use, and most residential lawns already have enough phosphorus to support a healthy lawn, there is no benefit from the addition of phosphorus lawn fertilizer.

Currently, the entire state of Minnesota and Wisconsin, as well as some Illinois cities, prohibit phosphorus-containing lawn fertilizers, except in the following instances:

- where a soil test shows a deficiency of phosphorus
- for newly established lawns during the first growing season
- use of phosphorus fertilizers for gardens, trees, shrubs, and agricultural uses
- phosphorus created by yard waste compost and bio-compost

Phosphorus-free lawn fertilizer is readily available at many local retail outlets (Ace Hardware, Target, Menards, and Home Depot) in a wide variety of brands, all comparably priced with fertilizer containing phosphorus. Lawn service providers also have phosphorus-free fertilizer available.

The EAC recognizes that high phosphorus levels in ponds, rivers, and streams is a growing environmental concern and has dedicated time and effort to researching the issue and bringing it forward to the City Council's attention. The City Council authorized the EAC to launch an educational campaign to provide information to the public on the impact of phosphorus on the DuPage River, as well as local streams and ponds. Look for more information on phosphorus in future editions of *The Resource*.

Any questions or concerns should be directed to the EAC through its staff liaison, Ana Vainisi, at 630-393-9427 or [avainisi@warrenville.il.us](mailto:avainisi@warrenville.il.us).

-Bob Kanara-

## Disposing of Meds Safely!

Nationally, regionally, and locally, there is a growing concern about what to do with all the prescription drugs and medicines that are left over in our cabinets. When placed in the trash or flushed down the toilet, the medicines are polluting our water environment and the water supply. Pharmaceuticals have been recently found in the drinking water of 24 U.S. cities, including the Chicago area.

You can help reduce potential risks by bringing your expired and unused medications to one of 12 RxBox locations in DuPage County, including one at the Wheaton Police Department (900 W. Liberty Drive), and one at the DuPage County Sheriff's office (501 N. County Farm Road). The medications are then incinerated in collaboration with the Illinois EPA guidelines. Bring household medications including over-the-counter medicines, prescriptions, ointments, and liquid medications. You can also drop off asthma inhalers and glass (mercury) thermometers. Keep medications in their original containers or use a zip-top plastic bag. Help reduce the risk to our community by using this safe disposal method.

-Bob Kanara-

# The Resource

WARRENVILLE ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION

28W701 Stafford Place  
Warrenville IL 60555

Phone: 630-393-9427  
Fax: 630-393-6948  
www.warrenville.il.us



**Call J.U.L.I.E.  
before you  
dig  
1-800-892-0123**

## DuPage River Sweep

The annual **DuPage County River Sweep** is a county-wide stream cleanup held each spring to encourage volunteers to help "sweep our rivers clean" by picking up debris in and along the local waterways. During the 2009 Sweep, more than 560 volunteers cleaned up 5.37 tons of trash from the DuPage River and its tributaries, and restored more than 6,000 square feet of shoreline by removing invasive species and planting native plants.

**Join the 2010 Sweep!  
Saturday, May 22  
9:00 a.m. to Noon**

Contact The Conservation Foundation for more information. <http://www.theconservationfoundation.org>

## Recycling Foam Products

A post-consumer foam recycling drop-off site (the first in the state) recently opened in North Aurora, providing a free drop-off for foam with the number 6 on it. This is the state's first public site to accept foam food service containers, including foam cups, plates, take-out containers, egg cartons, as well as shaped or molded foam often used to package electronics. This effort will divert foam from area landfills and allow it to be recycled into new products such as picture frames and moldings.

To be accepted for recycling, the foam must bear the "6" symbol with chasing arrows:



Foam can be recycled by rinsing cups and containers to get rid of food and placing foam in a clear plastic bag.

Items not accepted: straws, lids, foam insulation, or packaging peanuts.

**RECYCLING LOCATION:**  
Dart Container Corp.  
310 Evergreen Dr.  
North Aurora, Ill., 60543.

-Rita Dolan-

## Recycling Portable Power

Each year we are being introduced to new products that make our lives significantly easier. The use of long-life battery packs and rechargeable energy sources have made it possible for us to bring many of these products with us wherever we go; but at what cost? More and more batteries are making their way into our landfills each year and releasing potentially harmful chemicals into the ground, water supplies, and our environment.

Read more about recycling portable power sources at [http://www.warrenville.il.us/c\\_dept\\_boards\\_natural.aspx](http://www.warrenville.il.us/c_dept_boards_natural.aspx).

-David P. Leonard-

## Air Quality Index

Each time you inhale, you expose yourself to particulate matter and ozone, both of which are hazardous to your health. While unhealthy levels of ozone only occur on hot, sunny days, particle pollution can reach unhealthy levels on hot summer days and also during cooler weather, including winter months. Follow these links for additional information: Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Air Quality Index <http://www.epa.state.il.us/air/aqi/> and Partner for Clean Air <http://www.cleantheair.org/>

-Rita Dolan-

## Upcoming Recycling Events

Please take advantage of the many recycling events taking place all around DuPage County in the next couple of months. For more information on items that can be recycled and a list of events, visit the environmental section of the City's website: [www.warrenville.il.us](http://www.warrenville.il.us)

-David P. Leonard-

## Open Burning Update

The Open Burning rules were recently revised to include a section for additional definitions to clarify language and intent and reduce the possibility of misinterpretation.

The City is also proposing pro-active enforcement and educational efforts in order to reduce the environmental and health impact of open burning and to decrease the number of violations.

Check out the revised Open Burning Ordinance at <http://www.warrenville.il.us/> and look under City Clerk for the Laserfiche link to view minutes, resolutions, and ordinances.