



THE MAIN DRAIN

STORMWATER NEWS YOU CAN USE

A Publication of the Portsmouth Department of Public Utilities/Public Works -

Division of Stormwater Management

SPRING 2005

BEFORE YOU BLOW, you should know:

Spring is finally here and it brings with it warmer weather and sunshine-filled days. It also draws many of us outside, calling our names to give our lawns some extra care to make them look green and healthy.

While we are eagerly cutting, pruning, fertilizing, and clipping to create that beautiful curb appeal, we often do not realize that our landscaping activities can be detrimental to the very environment that we are trying to beautify! The improper handling of grass clippings, yard wastes, leaves, fertilizers and herbicides often causes excess pollutants to end up in our stormwater systems and nearby waterways.

One of the most common mistakes we make is to blow leaves and grass clippings into the street, storm drains or drainage ditches. Though it may seem insignificant, blowing leaves and grass clippings into storm drains



and ditches not only pollutes waterways by adding extra nutrients, but also blocks drainage and causes street flooding. The underground storm drainage pipes and drainage ditches are designed for one thing and one thing only: to carry stormwater.

It is important to note that most Hampton Roads cities have codes that make dumping, blowing, or washing anything into a storm drain or drainage ditch a crime. That includes grass clippings and leaves. In some cities, such an offense is a Class One Misdemeanor, carrying a maximum penalty of up to one year in jail and/or a fine up to \$2,500. (In Portsmouth, it is classified as a Misdemeanor with a \$1,000 fine.)

The same penalties apply to the open disposal of motor oil or other hazardous wastes.

So . . . next time you get working in your yard, take the time to rake, sweep and bag up your clippings. Once collected, you should put them out with your regular trash or use them in a compost pile. As an alternative, you can even leave them on your lawn. As they decompose, they will actually add nitrogen back into your soil!

STORMWATER TIP OF THE MONTH:

REPORT VIOLATORS!

If you see someone deliberately rake, blow, sweep or throw anything into the storm drainage system (which includes the pipes, drainage inlets, gutters or drainage ditches), call the Police "Pollution Patrol" non-emergency number at 393-5300.

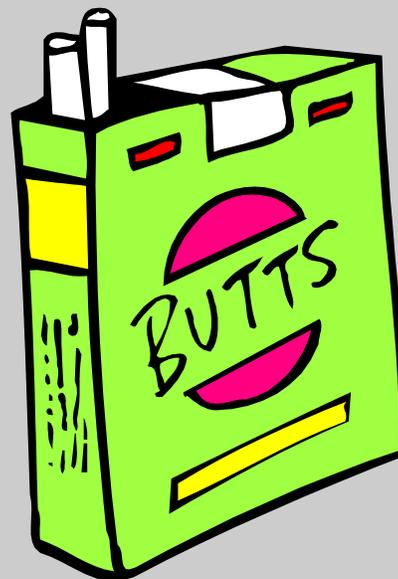
**Pitch those cigarette butts into an ashtray - not the gutter pan.
The fish will thank you!**

Have you ever noticed how many cigarette butts are in our streets? Maybe not, but in fact cigarette butts are the most littered item in America. These little fellows make our cities dirty, ugly, and worst of all, they are harmful to pets, children and wildlife if ingested and can pollute our receiving waterways.

Most people don't realize that cigarette butts, carelessly tossed on the ground, contribute to the contamination of our fragile environment. Still others mistakenly believe that cigarette butts are biodegradable and, therefore, not harmless to the environment. The reality is that the filter of the cigarette is made of cellulose acetate, which is NOT biodegradable, and the butts contain toxic residues - making them harmful.

Just look at the potential impacts from tossing out these little babies:

- If still lit, they may cause forest fires
- If still lit, they may cause house fires
- Chemicals in the butts may contaminate soils, groundwater or receiving waters
- Chemicals in the butts may poison small children, pets, or wildlife if ingested



Tossing butts into the gutter is a problem that potentially affects all of us—smokers and non-smokers alike. And the solution is in the hands of everybody too! If you are a smoker, use an ashtray, personal pocket ashtray or the available receptacles outside of almost every public place to discard your cigarette butt. DON'T throw them out of your car window or into the street or on the sidewalks. For non-smokers, your mission is to try to encourage the smokers in your life to at least be responsible and properly dispose of **t h e i r BUTTS!**



KEEP YOUR BUTT OUT OF THE GUTTER!



A Proactive Strategy for "BMP" Lake and Pond Management

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The City of Portsmouth, VA has 28 stormwater lake and pond "Best Management Practices" (BMPs) that receive stormwater from City streets. The BMPs range in age from more than 45 years to less than 6 years. As the BMPs age, they naturally collect sediment and require maintenance.

In 2003, the City of Portsmouth hired the nationally recognized environmental firm CH2M HILL to conduct preliminary assessments and prepare a plan for managing the lakes and ponds. In this study, the BMPs were evaluated using specific structural and biological parameters and then prioritized for their maintenance needs based upon the evaluation data. Preliminary repair costs were also developed for each lake and pond based upon the evaluation data.

As a follow-up to the preliminary assessments, Aquatic Services, Inc. (ASI) was contracted by the City in 2004 to begin detailed assessments of each lake and pond. ASI's evaluation will consider water quality data and structural and aesthetic parameters. The City will conduct any necessary hydrographic survey work to support ASI's efforts. ASI will make recommendations and final maintenance prioritizations for lakes and ponds based upon the present status of the City's BMPs. This work is expected to be complete by the end of Fiscal Year 2006.

Following the final prioritizations, the City will be in a position to begin budgeting for the formal implementation of the Lake & Pond Management Plan.

The City's "Proactive Strategy for BMP Management" was recently presented at the March 2005 Virginia Water Conference, held in Virginia Beach, Virginia and sponsored by the Virginia Lakes & Watersheds Association. **Portsmouth's "Proactive Strategy for BMP Management" is the first of its kind in the Commonwealth.**



Don't drip and drive !

The cities and counties of Hampton Roads want to remind you that proper auto maintenance can have a big impact on our local waterways.

When it rains, leaking automotive fluids are washed down the storm drains that flow straight into area streams, rivers and bays.

With 1,160,165 registered vehicles in Hampton Roads, that's a lot of potential sources for pollution. So, whether you do it yourself, or use a professional service, keep your car well maintained and dispose of automotive fluids properly.

For more info, log onto www.hrstorm.org or call the info line: 58-STORM

FROM THE HOMEFRONT TO THE WATERFRONT
HR STORM
CLEAN WATERWAYS BEGIN WITH YOU

THE CITY OF PORTSMOUTH

THE MAIN DRAIN

The Main Drain is a publication that addresses local Stormwater and Erosion and Sediment Control issues and is produced by The City of Portsmouth, Department of Public Utilities/Public Works - Division of Stormwater Management.

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Applications Being Accepted for Mini-Grants Program

The Hampton Roads Environmental Education Teams (HR WET, HR STORM and HR CLEAN) offer competitive mini-grants of up to \$250 each year to provide supplemental funding for environmentally-related projects. All school teachers (K-12) and youth leaders in the Hampton Roads region are eligible.

All projects should be specifically tied to litter prevention, waste minimization and recycling or beautification; or water conservation, pollution prevention and efficiency.

For a list of appropriate topic areas, more information and access to the easy-to-fill-out application, refer to the HR STORM website at: <http://www.hrstorm.org/MiniGrant.shtml>