

Nutrient pollution is one of America's most widespread, costly and challenging environmental problems, and is caused by excess nitrogen and phosphorus in the air and water.

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The Problem

When too much nitrogen and phosphorus enter the environment - usually from a wide range of human activities - the air and water can become polluted. Nutrient pollution has impacted many streams, rivers, lakes, bays and coastal waters for the past several decades, resulting in serious environmental and human health issues, and impacting the economy.

Sources & Solutions

The primary sources of excess nitrogen and phosphorus are:

- Agriculture - Animal Manure & Chemical Fertilizers
- Stormwater - Hard surfaces carry pollutants into waterways
- Wastewater - Treatment Facilities do not always remove enough nitrogen and phosphorus before discharging into waterways.
- Fossil Fuels - Electric power generation, industry, transportation and agriculture have increased the amount of nitrogen in the air through use of fossil fuels.
- In and Around the Home - Fertilizers, yard and pet waste and certain soaps and detergents contain nitrogen and phosphorus, and can contribute to nutrient pollution if not properly used or disposed.

Where it Occurs

- Air
- Groundwater and Drinking Water
- Lakes & Rivers
- Coasts & Bays

In Your Home

- Choose phosphate-free detergents, soaps, and household cleaners.
- Always pick up after your pet.
- Inspect your septic system annually.
- Choose WaterSense labeled products which are high performing, water efficient appliances.
- Turn things off/unplug them when you're not using them.

In Your Yard

What can you do:

- Apply fertilizers only when necessary and at the recommended amount.
- Avoid applying fertilizer close to waterways.
- Don't apply fertilizer before windy or rainy days.
- Plant a rain garden of native plants, shrubs and trees that reduce the amount of fertilizer needed and provide a way for water to soak into the ground.
- Install a rain barrel to collect rainwater; the rainwater can later be used to wash your car or water your plants and lawn.

In Your Community

Get Involved:

- Volunteer Monitoring
- Find information about local watershed groups, case studies and other tools to reduce nutrient pollution in your community.

For more info please contact: Ray Wurm, City of Buffalo Water Reclamation Supervisor, at ray.wurm@ci.buffalo.mn.us

Information provided on this flyer from: [epa.gov/nutrient pollution](http://epa.gov/nutrient%20pollution)