



C O N N E C T I C U T R I V E R

S t o r m w a t e r C o m m i t t e e

November 4, 2019

Hello professional landscaper,

As you may know, many communities here in the Pioneer Valley are subject now to more stringent federal stormwater permit requirements that came into effect July 2018. This permit requires communities to reduce contaminated storm flows to local rivers, streams, and lakes.

Why should you care as a professional landscaper?

Many lawn care practices can contribute to storm flows that are especially high in nutrients. Improper use and disposal of fertilizers, leaves, and grass clippings, can put nitrogen and phosphorous into these storm flows that enter local waters.

Under the Clean Water Act, we have made important strides toward fishable and swimmable waters, but we still have some distance to go. Do your part and learn more about best land care practices. To be sure, these are shifts in practice that will involve your client as well. You might start by considering the following related to leaf litter this fall:

- Keep leaves off of driveways and roadways where they can easily wash into storm drains and contribute to higher nutrient flows during the fall season.
- Use a mulching mower. By mulching the leaves into the lawn, you avoid having to rake/blow and bag and you offer a way to manage autumn leaves while providing your client with free fertilizer. Mulched leaves put nutrients back into the ground and reduce the overall need for more soluble fertilizer products, which present greater problems for our local waterways.
- Alternatively, if your client has an existing compost pile, you can recommend that they consider allowing you to add leaves to the pile. Leaves provide a critically important element (carbon) to the composting process, making for a more soil enriching product to be used in the next growing season. Be sure compost piles are located away from streams, lakes, or storm drains as these decomposing materials and nutrients could easily leach to these water resources.

Thank you for considering these better land care practices for leaf litter. We will continue to reach out to you as part of our stormwater permit compliance work.

If you have any questions or thoughts, please contact Patty Gambarini at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. She facilitates our coalition of 20 municipalities regulated under this federal stormwater permit. Her e-mail is: pgambarini@pvpc.org.

Sincerely,

Kevin Chaffee, Committee Chairman
Natural Resources Manager, City of Springfield

Randal Brown, Committee Vice Chairman
Public Works Director, Town of Southwick

Town of Agawam
Town of Belchertown
City of Chicopee
Town of East Longmeadow
City of Easthampton
Town of Granby
Town of Hadley
City of Holyoke
Town of Longmeadow
Town of Ludlow
City of Northampton
Town of Palmer
Town of South Hadley
Town of Southampton
Town of Southwick
City of Springfield
Town of West Springfield
City of Westfield
Town of Wilbraham
University of
Massachusetts
Pioneer Valley
Planning Commission