

## Potential Titles:

**From Streets to Streams: The Impact of Street Leaves on Water Quality**

**Clean Streets, Clean Waters: How Clearing Leaves from the Street before it Rains Can Make a Difference**

Fall is just around the corner here in **ADD NAME OF MUNICIPALITY**. The autumn leaves and crisp air make it hard not to smell pumpkin spice as we get ready for corn mazes, hay rides, and other fall traditions. As leaves blanket our neighborhoods, it's tempting to let them collect where they may. This season, however, we urge you to take proactive steps to remove leaves from the streets before major rainfalls to protect our waters and reduce localized flooding.

You might be familiar with the idea that leaving leaves and grass clippings on your lawn can naturally enrich the soil with nutrients - and that's definitely true! However, when it comes to leaves in the street, the situation is different. Paved surfaces don't allow nutrients to absorb into the ground. Instead, when water flows through leaves in the street, it creates a phosphorus-rich "leaf tea" that drains into our storm sewers and travels through a system of underground pipes **(in more rural areas, may simply want to say "flows through roadside ditches")** that eventually empty into our lakes, rivers, and streams. Too much phosphorous in our waterways can cause algae blooms, low oxygen levels and murky waters that can be harmful to aquatic life, pets and people. By removing leaves from the street before it rains, we can cut phosphorous levels in urban stormwater by up to 80%, significantly improving the health of our waters.

**ADD INFORMATION ON MUNICIPAL LEAF COLLECTION/STREET CLEANING EFFORTS OR OTHER EFFORTS TO REDUCE STORMWATER POLLUTION**

Communities across Dane County are working hard to reduce stormwater pollution to protect our waters. You can help this fall by:

1. Safely remove leaves from the street in front of your home before it rains.
2. Recycle leaves on your property or **add local guidelines for leaf collection/yard waste drop off option.**
3. Sign up to receive Dane County Leaf-free Streets Rain Alerts this fall (Oct. 1- Nov. 30) at <https://ripple-effects.com/Leaf-free-Streets>. Alerts will be issued 1-2 days before a significant rain event reminding you that it's time to remove street leaves.

By taking these steps, you can help protect the quality of our local waters. This fall, let's work together to ensure our community remains vibrant and our waterways stay healthy!

Learn more at: <https://ripple-effects.com/Leaf-free-Streets>.