**Leaves: Great for Lawns, Bad for Lakes**

Autumn in Wisconsin, it brings with it cool, crisp nights, apples, pumpkins and yes leaves, lots of leaves. If you are fortunate enough to have large trees that provide welcome shade in the summer you are no stranger to the piles of leaves they drop in the fall.

Leaves mulched into lawns and gardens act as a natural fertilizer helping to fuel plant growth each spring. Unfortunately, when left in the streets, leaves can have that same fertilizer effect on our waters causing algae blooms, low oxygen levels and murky waters that are harmful to aquatic life, pets and people. As rain flows through street leaves it creates a phosphorus rich “leaf tea” that washes down our storm drains to nearby lakes and rivers (OR replace with name of local waterbody). Did you know that keeping leaves off of streets in the fall before it rains can reduce the amount of phosphorus in urban stormwater by 80% compared to no leaf removal? It’s a great way to help protect our waters! INCLUDE A SENTENCE ON WHAT YOUR MUNICIPALITY IS DOING TO KEEP STREETS LEAF-FREE.

**Join us in keeping streets leaf-free this fall! It’s easy! Before the rain…**

 1. Safely remove leaves from the street in front of your home and nearby storm drains.

2. INSERT YOUR COMMUNITY’S LEAF COLLECTION GUIDELINES or recycle leaves on your property.

3. Sign up to receive Leaf-free Streets Rain Alerts this fall (Oct. 1- Nov. 30). Alerts will be issued (via text or email) 1-2 days before a significant rain event reminding you that it's time to remove street leaves. To learn more or to sign up for Leaf-free Streets Rain Alerts visit: www.ripple-effects.com.