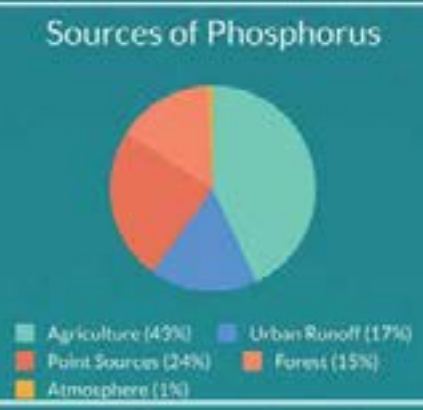
Easy Ways to Reduce Your Phosphorus Impact

What is Phosphorus?

Naturally occuring element found in fertilizers, household cleaners, and human waste.

The EPA is looking to reduce the phosphorus loading to rivers and streams the poin sources, such as wastewater treatment plants, and urban runoff. During dry weather flow, up to 75% of the Fox River is treated wastewater effluent.

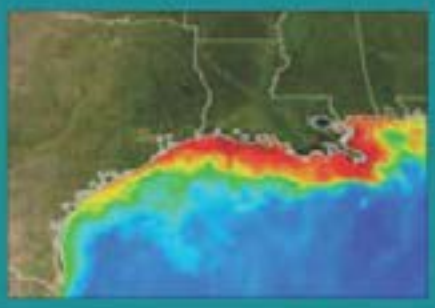


Why should we reduce our impact?

Phosphorus is the limiting nutrient for algae in the water. When there is too much phosphorus in the water, algae starts to overgrow. Too much algae blocks sunlight from penetrating the water and leads to underwater plants and animals to be left without oxygen. Thus, hypoxic zones are created where plants and animals cannot live, but bacteria thrive.

What is the big picture of the problem?

In the Gulf of Mexico, there is a dead zone that is over 6,000 sq. miles big. It is due to algal growth that leads to hypoxic conditions in the water. Treater wastewater from Illinois is discharged into rivers that eventually lead to the Mississippi River, and ultimately, the Gulf of Mexico, contributing to the growth of the dead zone.



What can you do to help?

Be conscious of products that have phosphorus and limit the amount sent down the drain to reduce the overall amount of phosphorus in rivers and streams.

Ways to help

Fertilizer
Use Phosphate Free Fertilizer

Detergents
Buy Green Cleaning Products

Pet Waste
Always pick up after your pet

Car Washing
Use non-toxic, phosphate-free soaps

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Sources: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Washington State Department of Ecology, US Geological Survey, Utah Department of Environmental Quality, The Science Education Resource Center at Carlton College, The Water Research Center, Friends of the Fox River