

Leave Your Leaves Out of the Wetlands!
Submitted by the Natural Resources Commission

Do you think it's environmentally okay to rake your leaves, or dump your grass clippings, into a wetland or lake to dispose of them?

Well, it's NOT.

Please do not dump leaves and grass clippings into wetlands. Your local choir of frogs and toads will especially appreciate it.

Every wetland, large or small, plays an important role in the health of our City's water resources. Wetlands act as biological and mechanical filters which prevent pollutants from entering lakes, rivers, and groundwater. They provide important habitat for birds, animals, and plants. Wetlands are also important in controlling stormwater. Their flexible storage capacity allows flood waters to be released slowly, reducing flood damage.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) *highly discourages* individuals from dumping their leaves and grass clippings into any lake, river, or wetland. When leaves and grass clippings are dumped into them, they become clogged and can't filter properly. Leaves and grass clippings also add nutrients that use up valuable oxygen as they decompose, on which aquatic organisms in the food chain depend.

The DNR encourages good stewardship of our water and land resources. There are alternative stewardship practices for disposing of leaf and grass clippings that are more environmentally friendly. The best way to dispose of this waste is to compost it either on your property or at a designated compost site, such as the one located just north of here at 5900 Sherwood Rd in White Bear Township.

It is especially important that North Oaks residents who have a wetlands on their property understand their value, preserve them, and use good management practices to protect them. Your North Oaks Natural Resources Commission is working on developing best management practices to protect and maintain our water resources. Watch for more information in the coming months.