Building towards cleaner water: Cost-effective ways to protect our water when building or remodeling a home

When remodeling your home or building an addition, why not make a few simple (and low cost) changes to help protect lakes, rivers and groundwater?

- To reduce stormwater runoff without spending a dime, direct new downspouts into a garden or the lawn and away from pavement.

- When redoing your driveway or adding a patio, angle it slightly so that water runs off it into vegetated areas where the water can be absorbed.

- Before laying new sod, till the soil in your yard deeply to reduce compaction and increase infiltration. Also consider replacing disturbed sections of your lawn with native plants, shrubs or trees instead of sod. They are lower maintenance, require less watering, and absorb more rainwater than turf.

Take the extra step!

Replacing or installing a driveway? Consider using porous pavement. Water soaks right through it, eliminating runoff.

Reduce erosion and drainage problems in your yard with a raingarden. They are low maintenance and help keep lakes clean.

Lower your water bill by installing rain barrels under downspouts to capture rooftop runoff that can be used to water your yard.

Don’t know where to begin or need technical assistance? Contact Tyler Cowing, City of Fairmont Water Resources Technician
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Erosion and Sediment Control
If you are building a new home or undertaking a remodeling project that disturbs soil in your yard, it is your responsibility to install temporary erosion and sediment controls to ensure that dirt is not washed into storm sewers or nearby waterways. Depending on the size of your project, you may be required to submit a Sediment and Erosion Control Plan.

Temporary erosion controls include:
- Silt fence
- Sediment control logs
- Wood or straw mulches
- Compost with seed
- Erosion control blankets, and
- Temporary seeding

When your project is complete, establish permanent vegetation in your yard as soon as possible, either by using sod or grass seed, or by planting flowers and shrubs with shredded wood mulch as cover.

For erosion control advice, contact Tyler Cowing, City of Fairmont Water Resources Technician.

Pollution Prevention
Your home construction project can create a lot of junk! Be sure to dispose of construction debris, yard waste and hazardous materials properly so that they don’t pollute local water resources.

Concrete Wash
It is illegal to dump concrete wash into streets and ditches or to let it run into nearby water bodies. Dump concrete wash in a contained area where it can dry out or use a concrete washout service.

Construction Waste
During construction, keep debris away from the street and under cover so that it is not washed away by rain. Contact one of Fairmont’s local sanitation services for assistance with proper disposal.

Yard Waste
It is illegal to dump yard waste such as grass, leaves, brush and stumps in your regular trash or in nearby wetlands. The City of Fairmont offers a free site to dispose of lawn waste, brush, and trees. The site is located on 100th St. west of County Rd 39.

Household Hazardous Waste
To dispose of paints, thinners, solvents, cleaners, wood preservatives and other remodeling and repair (Household Hazardous Waste) contact Billeye Rabbe, Martin and Faribault County Solid Waste Coordinator or drop off items at one of the county collections.