

# 25 Things YOU Can Do

## to Help Protect and Preserve the Illinois River and its Watershed



1. Decrease soil erosion by keeping the soil in your yard covered with grass, trees, groundcovers and other plants.
2. Where possible, direct down-spouts and gutters to drain onto the lawn, plant beds or containment areas where rain will soak into the soil rather than run off the yard.
3. Clean up after your pet, and properly dispose of pet wastes to reduce bacterial and nutrient pollution from getting into storm sewers.
4. Don't litter, and pick up any litter you see.
5. Fertilize sparingly and carefully.
6. Choose earth-friendly landscaping by planting native vegetation on all disturbed, bare areas.
7. Create swales (low areas) or terracing to catch, hold and filter stormwater.
8. Dispose of grass clippings and leaves by building a compost pile and using the mulch—instead of dumping the landscape wastes into a gully.
9. Use mulch, bricks, flagstone, gravel or other porous surfaces for walkways, patios and drives in order to reduce the amount of impervious areas contributing to stormwater runoff.
10. Install a silt fence to prevent soil from eroding from new construction or cleared land into storm water or streams.
11. Wash your car on the lawn, not the driveway (so more water soaks in and less runs off), and avoid using soap containing phosphates.
12. Minimize lawn watering—keep off street and sidewalk.
13. Conserve water at home.
14. Stabilize steep slopes by installing retaining walls, terraces or other structures.
15. Collect and store rain runoff from your roof in a rain barrel.
16. Sweep your sidewalk or driveway instead of washing with a hose.
17. Manage pests responsibly in lawns and gardens by using non-chemical approaches for pest control whenever possible.
18. Recycle oil from cars and lawn mowers.
19. Carefully store and dispose of household cleaners, chemicals and oil.
20. Participate in a storm stenciling program for storm sewers.
21. Adopt (or clean up) a creek, stream, lake, roadside or park.
22. Organize a stream or watershed walk for your neighbors, service club, church or community group.
23. Organize a local tour featuring farms that use conservation practices, public water supply, sewage waste treatment plant, public lakes and streams.
24. Provide your local school with a list of speakers that may talk to students about the Illinois River, soil and water conservation, and environmental issues in your community.
25. Join local environmental organizations and watershed committees and become a river activist to improve the quality of the Illinois River watershed.

