

# Mainstream

News from the Surface Water Management Agency of Clackamas County (SWMACC)

Summer 2004

## Lower Tualatin Citizens Advisory Committee

Hilda Stevens gave a great presentation on what the Regional Coalition for Clean Rivers and Streams is sponsoring this year.

The Coalition is stressing "Natural Alternatives for your Lawn and Garden" which is basically promoting chemical free gardening. It is recommended we reduce the amount of chemicals that are washed into the rivers and streams by their over use after a rain event...use an alternative such as compost. This is a natural fertilizer, which slowly releases nitrogen and is much healthier for your lawn, kids, birds, and wildlife. This also reduces watering and maintenance helping to reduce costs and work. *See further information on back page of newsletter*



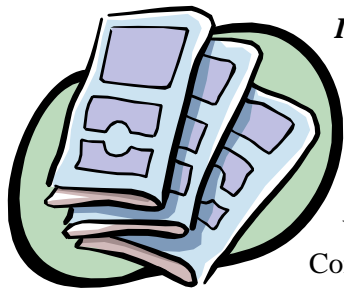
The next Lower Tualatin Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting will tentatively be held on Thursday

August 12, 2004. There will be the annual potluck and end of the year meeting with a special guest speaker sharing information on the "Goal 5" fish and wildlife habitat protection proposal before the Metro Council. For more information please call Randy Shierman at 503-557-2855.

## INFORMATIONAL BROCHURES AVAILABLE AT WATER ENVIRONMENT SERVICES

If you plan on putting in a lawn, adding to one or enhancing your landscape with natural plants. WES has information brochures available to assist you.

*Plan a Lawn ... to meet your needs and the needs of your lawn.* With information on the benefits of turf, planning a lawn or just maintaining one.



*It's So Easy ... Stream-Friendly Home and Yard Care* contains lots of information about lawn and garden care along with recipes for Fertilizer, Organic Weed Control, Organic Insect Control and Eco-lawns.

*Gardening with Native Plants* information about landscaping with native plants (Naturescaping) with pictures and names of the plants.

*Stream & Wetland Enhancement Guide* lists techniques that will help you control erosion, manage invasive plants, and cultivate a healthy, native landscape.

*Protecting your Watershed* explains how people affect watersheds.

## RIVER SAFETY

### Be Very Careful Using Rivers

Recreational waders and swimmers should use caution in Northwest rivers and lakes.

- Never swim or wade alone.
- Learn to swim if you don't know how.
- Non-swimmers should wear a life jacket.
- Don't over estimate your swimming skills

### Children and Swimming

Many drowning victims are children.

- Children should wear a life jacket.
- Never rely on inner tubes or inflatable toys
- Young children should NOT play in rivers or lakes without an adult nearby.
- Older children should be closely supervised.

**Drowning people often pull down would-be-rescuers by grasping and climbing on them. Reach with a:**

- Branch
- Towel
- Shirt (not your own)
- Paddle or anything between you and a drowning person.



**OR THROW them anything that floats. Such as:**

- An Ice Chest
- A Ball
- Or Plastic Jugs

### Recognize the Symptoms of Cold Exposure (Hypothermia)

- Blue Lips
- Shivering
- Confusion

Leave the water immediately if you develop any symptoms of hypothermia.



## Tualatin River Keepers Events

- 7/11 9 am-noon Summer Paddle Trip
- 7/24 10 am-1 pm Summer Paddle Trip
- 8/7 10 am-1 pm summer Paddle Trip
- 8/21 6pm-8 pm Mid-Summer's Night Paddle Trip
- 9/11 11 am-2 pm School's In! summer Paddle Trip
- 9/18 noon-4 pm End of Summer Paddle Trip
- 9/25 9 am-5 pm Upper Tualatin River Van Tour
- 10/2 noon-3 pm Fall Paddle Trip

For more details check out:

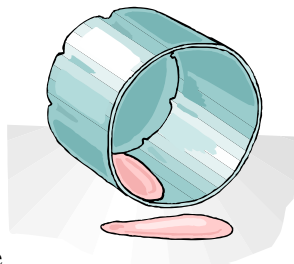
<http://tualatinriverkeepers.org/eventscalendar.html>

## Spills and Illicit Discharges

By Andrew Swanson

Water Environment Services (WES) protects surface water and groundwater quality by preventing, detecting, addressing - and if necessary - controlling the discharge of certain “point sources” of waste and wastewater to the County’s storm sewer system within Surface Water Management Agency of Clackamas County. Storm sewer systems typically provide little or no treatment for these discharges, so most or all of this pollution is then passed directly into surface waters or groundwater.

Painting-related wastes, automotive fluids, chlorinated pool/spa waters, and certain types of washwater are just a few of the many types materials that should never be discharged into the storm sewer system. These discharges can enter public storm sewer systems in a variety of ways, such as through hard-piped connections, flexible hoses, or by dumping the wastewater directly into storm water catch basins that serve streets and parking lots. If you become aware of a release to a storm sewer system, groundwater, or to a surface water body that may involve dangerous waste, hazardous waste, or polluted wastewater, please evacuate to a safe place and contact WES immediately.



**Please contact WES at 503-353-4567 (7:30am to 4:30pm, M-F) to report a release** or to learn more about how you can prevent the discharge of these materials into the storm sewer system from your home or business. To report an “after hours” release of dangerous or polluted wastes, please call Clackamas County’s 24-hour dispatch center at 503-655-8211. *Please note that for significant hazardous materials incidents, promptly call 911, and then call WES at 503-353-4567.*

In general, clean rainwater and clean springwater are the only materials that are allowed to be discharged into storm sewers. Exceptions are allowed for a few very specific types of discharges. These exceptions include, but aren’t limited to, discharges from street washing and residential car washing. Please call Andrew Swanson of WES at 503-353-4598 to learn more about how you can wash cars and streets in a manner that protects (or minimizes harm to) water quality.

## Is your lawn chemical free?

Maybe it should be.

### 1. Apply compost

Top dress your lawn with fine compost about a quarter-inch deep-provide a slow release of nitrogen. It reduces watering, improves drainage and improves the soil.

### 2. Grasscycle

Leaving grass clippings on your lawn releases nutrients and cuts your fertilizer needs in half.

### 3. Use organic or slow-release fertilizer

Use a complete organic fertilizer once each year. A soil test can tell you your fertilizer needs or whether you even need to fertilize. Organic fertilizers are made from naturally occurring materials such as bone meal, seaweed and rocks, not chemicals.

### 4. Skip the weed and feed

Weed and feed contains fertilizer and weed killers. Why use weed killer over the entire lawn if you only need to get rid of a few weeds? Remember to dispose of any toxic lawn and garden chemicals safely at a Metro Hazardous Waste Facility.

### 5. Aerate and over seed with appropriate grass varieties

Aerate using a rented power aerator, or push a garden fork six inches deep every four inches into the lawn and work back and forth to loosen the soil. After aerating or raking to expose soil, over seed with a rye/fescue mix designed for Pacific Northwest conditions.

### 6. Water deeply but infrequently

Over watering promotes diseases and excessive growth, leaches nutrients from the soil and wastes water. Don’t water until you see the first signs of wilt. You can tell your lawn is wilted when footprints remain after you walk on it.

About an inch of water a week is all your lawn needs. Let the lawn dry out between waterings to encourage deep roots that will withstand the stress of drought. For lawns on heavy clay soils, water twice a week (or as needed) distributing 1/2 inch of water over the lawn at each watering so the soil can absorb it while avoiding surface runoff. Measure irrigation water by placing a can (a tuna can is good) on your lawn to catch the water. After one hour of watering, 1/2 inch should accumulate.

### 7. Know when to water

Save water and money by watering your lawn in the early morning or at night. The least amount of water will be lost to evaporation at that time. This type of watering schedule also reduces disease problems and poor water distribution caused by wind.

### 8. Have less lawn

Lawns require a lot of fertilizer and water, and large lawns limit plant diversity. Overall, less lawn can mean less work!

