*Short story for general southeast MN residents*

**Be weather-aware and water-wise**

Tips for reducing runoff to protect water resources in southeast Minnesota

Everyone has a role to play to reduce pollution runoff into lakes, streams, and groundwater — from private homeowners and cabin residents to small family farmers and larger agricultural operations. The following tips will help protect drinking water from private and community wells, prevent fish kills, and maximize soil and crop quality.

* To minimize pollution in residential areas, homeowners should minimize using lawn chemicals and avoid applying any lawn chemicals before rain, keep septic systems operating properly and dispose of household waste correctly.
* To protect lakes, rivers, and streams, shoreland owners should plant trees or deep-rooted native plants to slow, trap, or reduce pollutants that may leave the land and flow to waterways during rain events.
* To maximize benefits to crops and minimize negative impacts on water resources, farmers should use best management practices when applying manure and chemicals to fields. Manure and chemicals are important assets that increase crop productivity, but when applied before rains, field runoff pollutes water.

Runoff may impact drinking water in private and community wells. Geographic land features in southeast Minnesota, such as karst, can deliver pollutants to groundwater through sinkholes and fractured bedrock. Learn more about well testing at the [Water Quality/Well Testing/Well Disinfection](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/wells/waterquality/index.html) page on the Minnesota Department of Health website.

Minnesota’s weather is changing: We’re getting warmer and wetter. Strong storms following long dry periods can increase the risk for fish kills in streams.Rains can wash away valuable nutrients and pollute downstream waters. Watch the weather and avoid applying fertilizers, chemicals, and manure before rainstorms.

Report any spill, runoff, or fish kill 24/7 by calling the Minnesota Duty Officer at 1-800-422-0798. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and Department of Agriculture (MDA) coordinate on fish kill responses.

Talk to neighbors and do your part to preserve and protect water quality. Learn more at [www.pca.state.mn.us/fishkills.](https://www.pca.state.mn.us/fishkills)

*Pull out:* Fish kills can be caused by disease, changes in water quality, weather, water temperatures, water levels, and external sources, such as polluted runoff. There are often multiple factors that combine to cause a fish kill