



Stormwater Management Program News

Third Quarter 2020

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A New Way to Report a Stormwater Problem

The City of Cañon City has introduced a new phone and computer app named "SeeClickFix" which the public can download for free. SeeClickFix allows the user to report a stormwater problem or other issues within the City such as leaking water pipes and other water issues; trees, vegetation and trash; street issues and Code Enforcement issues. The app allows the user to enter comments and upload photos. Reports of issues are automatically sent to the City Department in charge of that issue so it can be addressed as soon as possible. City personnel can also enter comments, keeping the status of the issue up-to-date. SeeClickFix can be downloaded from the App Store for your phone or accessed at <https://crm.seeclickfix.com>

The app can also be accessed through the City of Cañon City's website/Report an Issue at www.canoncity.org.



City of Cañon City

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NUTRIENTS

What are nutrients? Nutrients are natural chemical elements that all living organisms need to grow. The nutrients of concern are primarily nitrogen and phosphorus.

Why are we concerned about nutrients? When too much nitrogen and phosphorus enter waterways they can act as catalysts to promote algae growth, leading to massive overgrowth called an "algae bloom". Algae are microscopic plants that live in water, forming the base of the aquatic food chain. They can be green, blue, red or brown and often form slick, slimy layers of scum on the surface of water or coat the surface of submerged rocks and vegetation. While algae blooms do occur naturally, human activities are contributing to an increase in their frequency and severity. Algae blooms consume large amounts of oxygen that fish, shellfish and other aquatic organisms need to survive. They cloud the water blocking sunlight which is needed by the plants in the water to grow and to produce oxygen. Algae can also clog fish gills, reducing the amount of oxygen they are able to extract from the water.

Certain types of algae can emit poisons which can cause health problems for humans and wildlife. Coming into contact with these poisons can cause stomach aches, rashes or more severe problems for humans and can severely sicken or kill pets and wildlife. Humans can also become sick after eating fish or shellfish which have absorbed these toxins. Harmful algae blooms can also release airborne toxins which can cause sore throats, headaches and serious respiratory problems. Excess nitrogen in drinking water can have impacts to human health, particularly for infants under 6 months of age.

Algae blooms do happen in Colorado, often during hot sunny weather in slow-moving bodies of water such as lakes. Harmful algae blooms also occur in Colorado; they can occur anywhere but are less likely to occur in high mountain lakes and reservoirs. The only way to know if an algae bloom is harmful is to have it tested. The best way to avoid becoming sick from an algae bloom is to stay out of the water, keep pets and livestock out of the water and don't drink the water.

There are simple field tests and observations that can be made to help narrow down the likelihood of an algae bloom being caused by harmful algae. One of the simplest is to insert a stout stick into the algae bloom: if it comes up with stringy, hair-like algae (as shown in the adjacent photo) it is most likely harmless filamentous algae. If the stick comes up looking like it is coated with green paint, there is a chance it could be a harmful blue-green algae bloom. The only way to tell positively that toxins are being produced, though, is through laboratory testing. If you suspect an algae bloom may be harmful, please contact the City of Cañon City Stormwater Program.



What is the source of excess nutrients? The primary sources of excess nitrogen and phosphorus are the improper use of fertilizers, pet and animal waste, failing septic tanks and sewage treatment plant discharges.

How can nutrient pollution be reduced? We can all help reduce nutrient pollution through the choices we make at home, with our pets, in lawn care and on our farms and ranches.

Lawn and Garden Care:

- Apply fertilizers only when necessary and at the recommended amount.
- Don't apply fertilizer before windy or rainy days.
- Apply fertilizer as close as possible to the period of maximum uptake and growth for grass and other plants, which is usually spring and fall in cool climate, and early and late summer in warm climates.
- Avoid applying fertilizer close to waterways.
- Do not overwater lawns and garden; use a soaker hose which can reduce overwatering that carries away fertilizers that would otherwise enrich lawns and gardens.
- Fill fertilizer spreaders on a hard surface so that any spills can be easily cleaned up.
- Properly store unused fertilizers and properly dispose of empty containers.
- Plant a rain garden of native plants, shrubs and trees that reduce the amount of fertilizer needed and provide a way for water to soak into the ground.
- Use pervious pavers for walkways and low traffic areas to allow water to soak into the ground.
- Use yard waste, which includes grass clippings and leaves, in mulch or compost for your garden. If this is not an option, bag all clippings and leaves for disposal, which keeps them from washing into streams.
- Maintain your lawn mowers, snow blowers, chain saws, leaf vacuums and similar outdoor power equipment to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions.

Pet Waste:

- Always pick up after your pet and dispose of the waste properly.
- Avoid walking your pet near streams and other waterways. Instead, walk them in grassy areas, parks or undeveloped areas.

Washing Your Car:

- Use a commercial car wash; commercial car washes are required to properly dispose of wastewater and many filter and recycle their water.
- At home, wash your car on a pervious surface such as grass or gravel (not concrete or asphalt) so water is filtered before reaching a water body.
- Use nontoxic, phosphate-free soaps.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT UPDATE

In November 2018 City Council approved borrowing \$8 million through issuance of Certificates of Participation to fund a stormwater capital improvement project with specific projects.

In January 2019, a Stormwater Project Prioritization Committee met several times to produce a list of priority projects to present to City Council. Following are the projects which were approved, along with the project status.

Dawson Ranch Culverts:

The culvert replacements in Dawson Ranch and Wolf Park are completed, ahead of the anticipated schedule.

9th Street – US Highway 50 to Mystic Ave:

This project combines both stormwater and drinking water infrastructure upgrades with the 2A Street Reconstruction. Funds for the project come from the Stormwater Capital Improvement funds, Water Utility Funds and the 2A Street Tax Fund. College Ave to Mystic is complete. Work is still continuing from College Ave south to Royal Gorge Blvd.

Abbey Drainage and Rhodes Ave:

Design plans are 70% complete. The projected start of the project is Winter 2020/2021.

WPA Drainage – Water Street to Kountz Ave:

Design plans are 30% complete. The projected start of the project is Winter 2020/2021.

Additional Projects:

S. 8th Street between Bridge Street and Myrtle Ave:

This project is funded through CDOT and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Funds (CMAQ). Irrigation lines were replaced in March in anticipation of the project. This project is now complete.

Personal Protective Equipment (masks and gloves)

While we continue to work through these times, taking precautions to help limit the spread of COVID-19, please remember that masks and gloves can be disposed of in trash receptacles. Please do not throw them on the ground once they've been used. Help keep our City clean by always properly disposing PPE and all trash.



"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe." – John Muir

Please feel free to direct any concerns or questions to Glenda DeBekker, City of Cañon City Stormwater Program at either 276-5265 or grdebekker@canoncity.org.