



# **City of Cañon City**

P.O. Box 1460 – 128 Main St. - Cañon City, CO 81215-1460  
(719) 269-9011 Fax: (719) 269-9017



## **Second Quarter 2014 Stormwater Management Program News**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

#### **Fremont County Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan:**

Fremont County is in the process of developing the County's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan. The City of Cañon City is partnering with Fremont County in this process. A Community Survey has been developed for residents and businesses of Fremont County. Your input and involvement is essential in the development of a mitigation plan update that truly reflects the perceptions and needs of County residents. Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey. Your ideas may become a part of the plan to make Fremont County safer and more resilient to natural hazards.

A link to the survey can be found on the City's webpage under Current Announcements, [www.canoncity.org](http://www.canoncity.org) or on Fremont County's home page, [www.fremontco.com](http://www.fremontco.com). The survey can also be accessed directly at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FremontCountyHMPCCommunitySurvey>. Questions about the plan can be directed to Steve Morrissey, Fremont County Emergency Manager, at 276-7422 or Laura Johnston, Tetra Tech Inc, at 303-312-8807 or [laura.johnston@tetrattech.com](mailto:laura.johnston@tetrattech.com).

**The Annual Stormwater Program Review** is now available on the City of Cañon City's website. It can be viewed at [www.canoncity.org/Utilities/Stormwater.htm](http://www.canoncity.org/Utilities/Stormwater.htm).

### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

#### **Blossom Festival:**

The Stormwater Program will have a booth again this year during Blossom weekend. We will be in Centennial Park in the Kidz Zone. Be sure to stop by for demonstrations, giveaways and information.

### **SPRING IS HERE!**

For many, spring means more time spent outdoors working on lawns and gardens and other projects. We'd like to pass along some tips and resources which may help you in preparing and maintaining a healthy yard and lessen potential impacts on stormwater runoff.

#### **Fertilizing Your Lawn**

Here are some general tips for lawn fertilization:

- Apply fertilizers only when necessary and follow the manufacturer's recommendations
- Consider having your soil tested to see if fertilization is necessary and what nutrients may be lacking
- Don't apply fertilizer when rain is forecasted or on windy days
- Fertilize when grass and other plants are in their period of maximum nutrient uptake and growth. This is not always in the spring. The following list for nitrogen fertilization is adapted from The Colorado State University Extension's Lawn Care Fact Sheet. To read the entire Fact Sheet (a resource we highly recommend) visit [www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/Garden/07202.html](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/Garden/07202.html)
  - ❖ High Maintenance Bluegrass or Ryegrass and Low-Maintenance Bluegrass can be fertilized in the spring or fall, but does not need to be fertilized from July to early August
  - ❖ Turf-type Tall Fescue or Fine Fescue can be fertilized in the spring or from mid-August to mid-September, but does not need fertilizer from July to early August and early October to early November
  - ❖ Buffalograss, Blue Grama and Bermudagrass should not be fertilized from mid-March to April and mid-August to early November. It can be fertilized, if needed, from May to mid-June and July to early August.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn after mowing. They decompose quickly and provide recycled nutrients and organic matter for the lawn, which can reduce the need for additional fertilizer
- Fill fertilizer spreaders on a hard surface so any spills can be easily and immediately cleaned up

## Notes on Nutrients

Nitrogen and phosphorus are naturally occurring nutrients found in our environment. Nitrogen is the most important nutrient for good lawn growth but too much nitrogen can cause problems, not only for your lawn but also for the environment. For your lawn, overfertilization with nitrogen can lead to thatch build-up and fast growth. This not only means mowing more often, but it also can affect how deep the roots grow. Shallow root systems use water less efficiently than deeper root systems.

Excess fertilizer or improperly applied fertilizer can be washed off of your lawn by overwatering or by storm events. The runoff carries the nutrients, and anything else that may be in its path, to the nearest storm drain or drainage channel, then on to the river. Stormwater is not treated so any chemicals, metals, trash, soil and nutrients are deposited directly into the Arkansas River. When nutrients enter a waterbody they can cause algae to grow faster than the ecosystem can handle. This is especially true for lakes and slower moving water. If you've ever seen a pond or a back-water eddy of a creek or river covered in green slime, you've seen an algal bloom. Algal blooms can severely deplete the oxygen in a waterbody by two methods. First the algae covering the water's surface blocks sunlight which plants need for photosynthesis, a process which produces oxygen as a by-product. Secondly, as the algae die they decompose in a process that uses oxygen. Aquatic life cannot survive in areas with little to no oxygen. Algae can also clog the gills of fish, making it difficult for the fish to extract the oxygen they need from the water. Some algae blooms can produce toxins and promote bacterial growth which can make people and animals sick if they come into contact with the water or eat tainted fish. Algae blooms can also impact the economy. Residents and visitors to Cañon City enjoy the river, whether it's by taking a stroll along the Riverwalk, rafting, fishing, swimming or enjoying a train ride along it. Pollution of the river, in any form, could cause a decrease in its recreational use, thus impacting our local economy. Algae blooms, excess nitrogen and phosphorus also can increase the cost of treating the water for use as drinking water. For more information on nutrient pollution visit [www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution](http://www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution).

## Watering Your Lawn

- Water your lawn in the late evening or early morning. This decreases water loss due to evaporation.
- The Cañon City area has mostly clay soils. This type of soil takes about 1-1 ½ inches of water to moisten the root zone to a 6-inch depth. Clay soils also need less frequent watering as they tend to hold the moisture longer, making it available to the roots.
- Avoid overwatering or applying too much water in too short a time. Clay soils can quickly become saturated. Any excess water will then run off your lawn. It may be better to water for a short period, move the sprinkler to another area, then return to the first area to apply the rest of the water.
- Adjust sprinklers so they water only your lawn or garden. Water hitting the sidewalk or street doesn't help your yard and can end up in the river along with anything it has picked up on the way there.
- Direct your roof drains toward your lawn or garden instead of onto hard, paved surfaces. Each downspout on a building can drain about 12 gallons of water per minute during a 1-inch rainfall. This runoff can be used to water your lawn or garden and may help decrease your utility bills.

## Landscaping

If you are installing new landscaping, consider xeriscapes, rain gardens or grass swales. Xeriscaping uses less water and chemicals. Rain gardens and grass swales can provide a place for rain water to collect and soak into the ground. The Colorado State University Extension at [www.ext.colostate.edu](http://www.ext.colostate.edu) is a good resource for planning and maintaining your landscape. Technical information on design and installation of rain gardens and grass swales can be obtained from the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District's Volume 3, Chapter 4 ([www.udfcd.org](http://www.udfcd.org)).

## A Final Note

Spring in Cañon City also means that the irrigation ditches will soon be running, which means the irrigation laterals will be filling with water. The responsibility for keeping the ditches and pipes adjacent to your property clean and free of debris is yours. Please make sure these ditches are kept clear even if you do not use the water in the lateral. Your neighbor downstream may be depending on that water and it's the law.

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](mailto:grdebekker@canoncity.org). You may also write to the City of Cañon City's Stormwater Program, P.O. Box 1460, Cañon City, CO 81215-1460.