

## **What will the melting snow reveal on your property?**

Now that temperatures are starting to rise and the snow is beginning to melt, our thoughts are looking ahead to summer and may involve recreating on or around our area lakes. The melting snow very well may reveal the accumulation of animal wastes on your property. The proper cleanup and disposal of this accumulated waste will have a direct impact on the water quality and resulting usability of the area lakes.

Studies show that the cumulative waste from animals can have a significant impact on the water quality of receiving water resources and have human health risks.

When animal wastes are washed into streams, rivers, or lakes, the waste decays, using up oxygen and releasing ammonia. Low oxygen levels and ammonia can kill fish and other aquatic life. Animal waste also contains nutrients that encourage weed and algae growth. Nutrient loaded waters can become cloudy, green, smelly, and unattractive for swimming, boating and fishing.

### **Appropriate ways to dispose of animal waste**

University of Minnesota Extension Service Water Resource Center recommends appropriate ways to dispose of animal waste and reminds the campus community that they can have a positive impact on the water quality of receiving water resources.

Pet waste and livestock manure, exposed to rainfall or snowmelt or disposed in storm drains, mixes with water runoff. Eventually, this runoff enters lakes, streams and rivers such as Forest Lake or the Sunrise River. Animal waste is a source of harmful nutrients and pathogens that degrade water quality, making water unsafe for recreation and aesthetically undesirable.

### **Steps to dispose of dog waste**

Specific steps to dispose of dog waste that can help prevent pest waste from entering waterways include:

- Dog waste can be buried in a location away from rivers, ponds, gardens and children's play areas. Waste should be buried at least 5 inches deep.
- Dog waste can be flushed down the toilet so it enters wastewater treatment facilities. Cat litter should never be flushed.
- When walking the dog, take a plastic bag and scooper. Once in a sealed bag, animal waste is safe for disposal in a trashcan.
- Horse and livestock manure should be kept in areas sheltered from the weather and away from nearby surface waters.

Remember, our actions within our watershed have a direct affect on our streams, rivers and lakes.

For more options about handling, using or disposing of animal waste, visit the University of Minnesota Extension Service website at <http://wrc.umn.edu/outreach/awm.html>, or contact Randy Anhorn, Administrator/Limnologist for the Comfort Lake – Forest Lake Watershed District at (651) 209-9753 or [randy.anhorn@clflwd.org](mailto:randy.anhorn@clflwd.org).