

**FOR CITY USE ONLY**

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_



City of Harrisonburg, Virginia  
Department of Public Works  
320 East Mosby Road  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801  
540-434-5928  
stormwater@harrisonburgva.gov

**Homeowner Nutrient Management and Lawn Care Agreement  
For those homeowners that apply fertilizer to their lawns**

**Parcel Information**

Tax Map Parcel Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Parcel Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nutrient Management Information**

*If all the selected provisions of the Nutrient Management Agreement are followed this Agreement is valid for 5 years from the date of application approval before re-submittal is required.*

**Square footage of turf covered by this agreement: \_\_\_\_\_ sq. ft.**

(See Web-GIS site and measure polygon tool at <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/stormwater-utility> to measure turf area)

**Nutrient Management Provisions**

**Read the following and check each provision you will implement on your lawn. Items 1 and 2 are required. For items 3-9, at least two provisions must be followed.**

1.  Maintain a dense cover of grass or conservation landscaping to reduce runoff, prevent erosion, and retain nutrients **\*Mandatory**
  - Dense grass or plant cover helps to reduce surface runoff which can be responsible for significant nutrient loss from the lawn. Lawns with poor turf cover have a high risk for nutrient loss, especially if soils are compacted or slopes are steep. Any bare spots or eroding areas should be reseeded, and may require some soil amendments, spot fertilization and, in extreme cases, stabilized with a biodegradable erosion control cover.
  
2. Reduce Fertilizer **\*Choose one option**
  - You have three fertilization options to reduce the risk that fertilizer from your lawn will reach local waterways, depending on the conditions of your lawn and your aesthetic preferences. If you are entering into a Nutrient Management Agreement, you are required to choose one of the following options:

1.  **OPTION 1:** The first strategy relies on a "reduced rate and monitor" fertilization approach. In this strategy, you only apply one-third to a half of the recommended application rate on the fertilizer bag label, and then monitor how your lawn responds over the next couple of months. If you are unsatisfied with the look of your lawn at that point, you can always re-apply fertilizer at the smaller dose. In most situations, however, you will find it hard to notice much of a difference in how good your lawn looks.
2.  **OPTION 2:** The second strategy is to fertilize at the recommended nitrogen fertilization rate but split it into 3 or 4 small doses during the growing season. Individual application rates should be no more than 0.9 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn in most parts of the local watershed. When assessing your property, we recommended that you measure your lawn area which will help you to figure out how much fertilizer you will need to buy. If you choose to fertilize, the following practices can further reduce the risk that fertilizer you do apply ever reaches local waterways.
3.  **OPTION 3:** Apply fertilizers based on soil test results. Soil samples collected by homeowners can be analyzed by the Virginia Cooperative Extension. More information on soil testing is available at [www.soiltest.vt.edu](http://www.soiltest.vt.edu).
  - The following is an additional list of places in Virginia where you can get a soil test analysis to see what (if any) fertilizer is required for your lawn.  
<http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/452/452-129/452-129.html>; <http://www.soiltest.vt.edu/>;  
<http://www.al-labs-eastern.com/>;  
[http://www.lynnhavenrivernow.org/files/pages/Soil\\_sample\\_April\\_2010.pdf](http://www.lynnhavenrivernow.org/files/pages/Soil_sample_April_2010.pdf)

**For items 3-9, choose two or more provisions to follow.**

3.  Do not apply fertilizers before spring green up or after the grass becomes dormant
  - Researchers have concluded that the highest fertilizer loss occurs in the winter when grass is dormant. In the northern part of the Bay watershed, dormancy usually begins around Halloween, whereas it begins around Thanksgiving in the southern part of the watershed.
4.  Maximize use of slow release N fertilizer
  - The risk of nutrient loss during the growing season can be further reduced if you buy slow release fertilizer products. Check the bag label when you shop to see how much water insoluble nitrogen or WIN it contains -- at least 20 to 50% of WIN is generally desirable.
5.  Immediately sweep off any fertilizer that lands on paved surface
  - Rotary spreaders are the most common method to apply fertilizers and can broadcast fertilizer granules near the edge of the lawn, street, or driveway, where they can be washed away in the next storm. Some experts think as much as 2 to 4% of applied fertilizer can be washed away in this manner. If you are buying a new spreader, consider models that have side broadcast deflectors that can sharply reduce off-target fertilization.

6.  Never apply fertilizer within 15 to 20 feet of any water feature and manage this zone as a grass, meadow, or forest buffer
- The risk of nutrient loss is also high when fertilizer is applied close to water features such as swales, drainage ditches, streams, shorelines, sinkholes and wetlands. Create a “fertilizer free” buffer zone around these water features and manage this area as a conservation landscape. Even if you don’t fertilize your lawn, there are still other good practices to make your yard more environmentally-friendly.
7.  Keep lawn clippings and mulched leaves on the lawn and keep them out of streets and storm drains
- Lawn clippings are an important nutrient and organic matter source which can enhance the health of your soils and your lawn. Using a composting lawn mower to keep the clippings on your lawn adds about one pound of N per 1,000 square feet of natural (and free) fertilizer to your lawn each year. You should treat lawn clippings and tree leaves as if they were a bag of fertilizer, and strive to keep them on your lawn, and out of the gutter, street, or storm drain system. When you rake your leaves in the Fall, it is good practice to run over them with your composting mower to mulch them into small fragments and add them to your compost pile in the backyard. Come late Spring, they will decompose into a fine organic mulch that you can add to your rain garden or conservation landscape as a top dressing (assuming that you turn over the pile every couple of months). Another option is to follow the yard debris and bulk collection schedule in the City of Harrisonburg. <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/bulk-collection>
8.  Set mower height at 3 inches or taller
- Maintaining taller grass produces a deeper and more extensive root system, which in turn, increases nutrient uptake and reduces lawn runoff volume. The deeper roots also reduce the need for supplemental irrigation during times of drought, suppress weeds and increase turf density.
9.  Use a professional lawn care service participating in the Water Quality Agreement Program with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation [http://dcr.virginia.gov/soil\\_and\\_water/wqagree.shtml](http://dcr.virginia.gov/soil_and_water/wqagree.shtml)

Do you hire a landscaping company to apply fertilizer/pesticide to your lawn)? Yes  No

Annual Nitrogen and Phosphorus fertilization rate, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

### Signature of Agreement

**Upon signing this document, I agree to follow the selected responsible lawn care maintenance items for the extent of the Agreement and for the total land area listed in this Agreement.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Owner Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Owner Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Additional Resources**

Virginia Cooperative Extension – Urban Nutrient Management; <http://www.ext.vt.edu/topics/lawn-garden/urban-nutrient-management/index.html>

Example Homeowner Nutrient Management Plan (VA DCR);  
[http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil\\_and\\_water/documents/nmtmsc-example\\_home\\_lawn\\_nmp.pdf](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil_and_water/documents/nmtmsc-example_home_lawn_nmp.pdf)

Chesapeake Bay Urban Nutrient Management Guidance;  
[http://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/Final\\_CBP\\_Approved\\_Expert\\_Panel\\_Report\\_on\\_Urban\\_Nutrient\\_Management--short.pdf](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/Final_CBP_Approved_Expert_Panel_Report_on_Urban_Nutrient_Management--short.pdf)