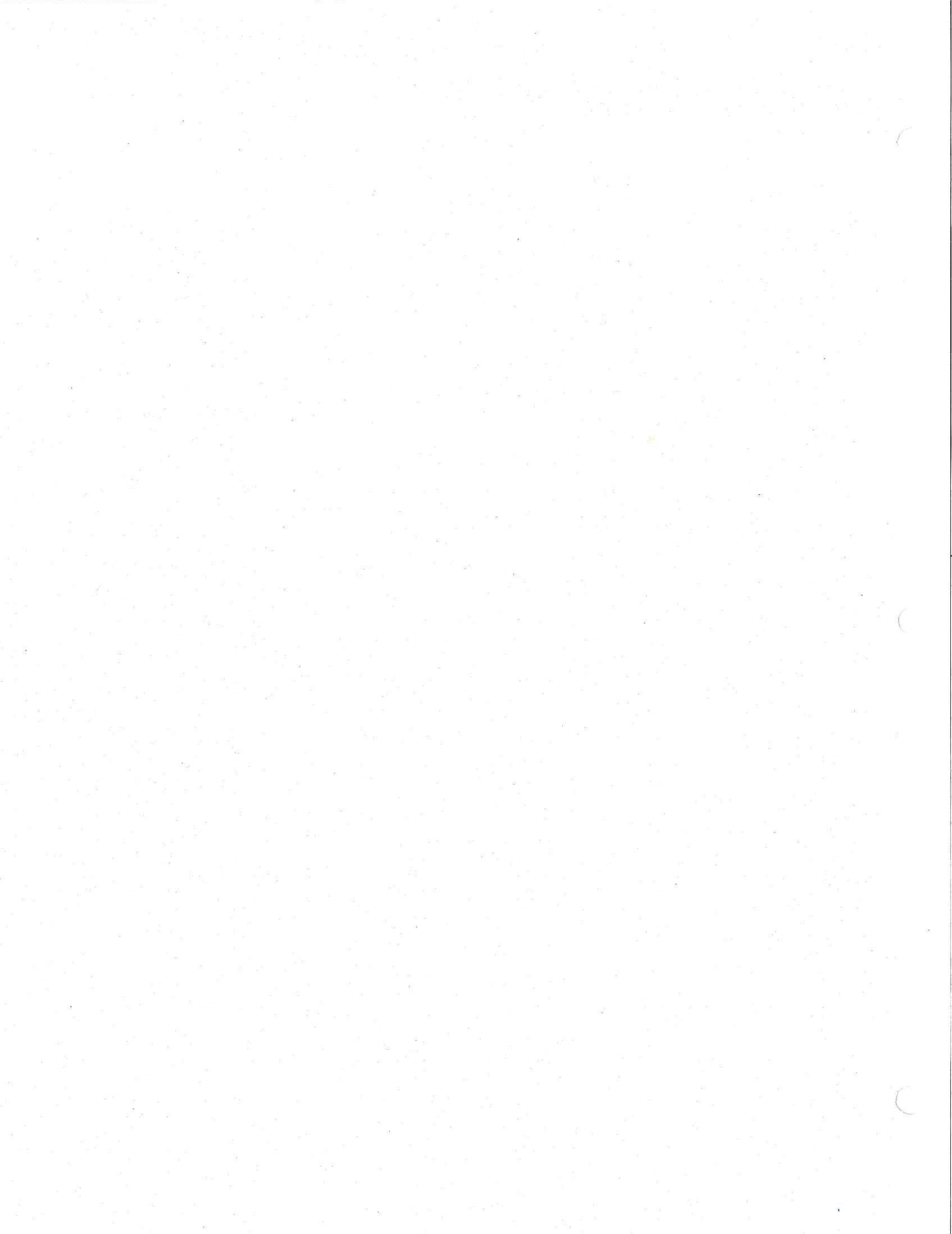


DON'T TRASH GRASS!

Community Action Handbook

A program to keep grass clippings
out of the waste stream





Don't Trash Grass

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A Program to Keep Grass Clippings
Out of the Waste Stream

Prepared cooperatively by the
Connecticut and Massachusetts
Departments of Environmental Protection



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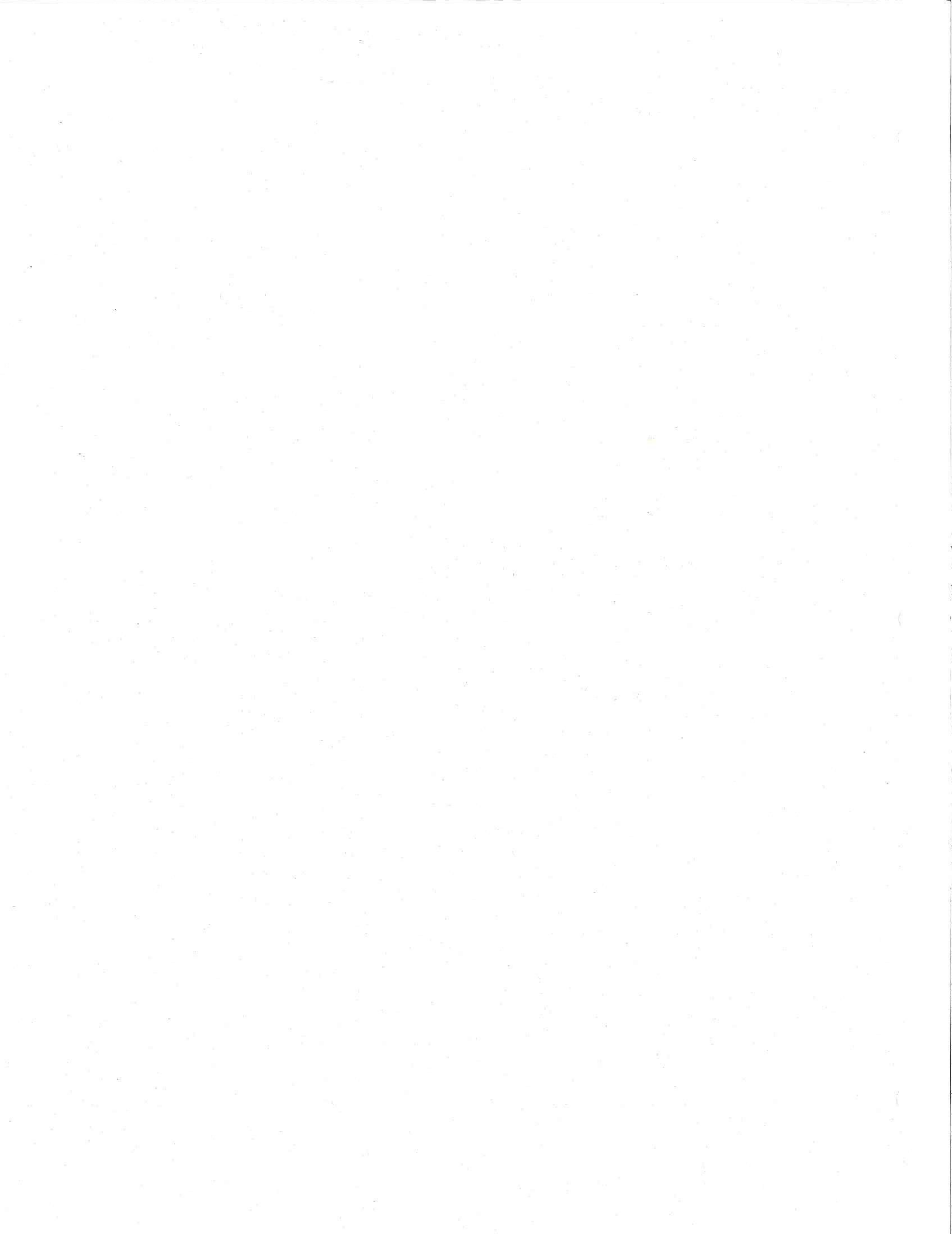


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CONTENTS



	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
ORGANIZING THE PROGRAM	3
Staffing	3
Funding	5
Sponsors	6
TAKING ACTION	7
Getting the Word Out	7
Information Distribution	7
Media Outreach	8
Events	9
Kickoff Meeting	9
Equipment Demonstration and Give-away	10
Displays at Traditional Events	10
Video Screenings	10
Presentations, Clinics, Field Days	10
Demonstration Lawns	11
No-Frills Volunteer Lawn Demonstration	11
Full-Blown Volunteer Lawn Demonstration	12
TOOLS	14
Timeline/Checklist	14
Resources	16
Materials Available for Public Education: Brochure, Video, Radio Public Service Announcement, Handbook	16
State Environmental Agencies	16
Sources of Expertise: State Cooperative Extensions, Professional Lawn Care Associations	17
Commonly Asked Questions and Answers about Lawn Care	18
Potential Sponsors	19
Sample Press Release	20
Sample Newspaper Advertisement	21
Sample Public Service Announcements (PSA)	22
Sample Letter to Members of Lawn Care Industry & Environmental Organizations	23
Sample Lawn Demonstrator Application	24
Sample Lawn Demonstrator Acceptance Letter	25
Sample Lawn Demonstrator "No Thank You" Letter	26
Lawn Signs	27
Other Promotional Items: Bumperstickers, T-shirts, etc.	27
References	28
EVALUATING THE PROGRAM	29
Methods	29
Sample Survey Form	30
WRAPPING UP	31
Publicize the Results	31
Celebrate	31



INTRODUCTION



Bagged grass clippings can significantly increase the waste stream during the growing season, using up valuable disposal space and adding needlessly to collection and disposal costs. This material, commonly considered “waste”, is actually a source of organic fertilizer. A garbage bag of grass clippings contains up to one quarter pound of usable nitrogen and other nutrients necessary for plant growth. Most golf course managers take advantage of this free source of nutrients and do not collect clippings from their expansive fairways.

Many residents who bag their clippings for disposal do it from habit or because they believe that grass clippings will contribute to thatch buildup or cause other damage to their lawns. This is not the case, if a few basic guidelines are followed.

The “Don’t Trash Grass” program is an educational campaign based on simple facts to foster lawn care practices that result in substantially reduced disposal needs and healthier lawns that are easier and less expensive to maintain. The program relies on basic turfgrass management principles used by professional turf growers across the country. This handbook contains guidance and materials for conducting a “Don’t Trash Grass” program in your community. Many of the materials you will need are located in the Resources Section and can readily be adapted for your use.

The main points of the “Don’t Trash Grass” program are:

- **Leaving grass clippings on lawns returns nutrients to the soil, resulting in healthier turf.**
- **It is easier and faster to leave clippings on lawns. Mowing your lawn takes almost 40% less time when you don’t bag grass clippings. Specific guidelines on lawn maintenance which incorporate leaving clippings on lawns are given in the “Don’t Trash Grass” brochure and video.**
- **It is less expensive to leave clippings on lawns than to bag and dispose them because there’s no need to buy bags, and less fertilizer and water can be used on the lawn.**
- **Grass clippings do not contribute to thatch buildup. Thatch is most often caused by overfertilizing and overwatering.**

- **Short clippings left on the lawn are not unsightly because they filter down to the soil and quickly decompose.**
- **Leaving clippings on lawns saves disposal capacity.**
- **Keeping clippings out of the waste stream saves taxpayer money in collection and disposal costs.**

The information to be conveyed is simple and brief; much of it is common sense. Since the advent of bagging mowers in the 1950's, however, common sense has not always dictated lawn care practices. Changing commonly held beliefs about lawn care, such as the idea that grass clippings cause thatch, requires a broad-based, ongoing public education effort. But an overall change toward the widespread practice of "recycling" grass clippings is necessary in light of state and national waste reduction goals, the closing of many landfills, and the challenges associated with centralized, large-scale composting of grass clippings. Residential management of grass clippings is being promoted by solid waste managers nationwide as a key component of yard waste management strategies. Yard waste disposal bans legislated by several states may necessitate residential management for some communities. It is the most sensible option, economically and environmentally.

Regardless of whether source reduction programs are mandatory or voluntary, compliance is most effectively achieved if people understand why and how they are expected to participate. Public understanding of the concepts and guidelines of the "Don't Trash Grass" program will increase public support for "grass recycling" and accelerate the change towards environmentally sound lawn care practices. The following pages offer a variety of approaches for gaining public acceptance, with a suggested timeline for planning and action.



ORGANIZING THE PROGRAM



The major elements of a complete “Don’t Trash Grass” program include:

- **Information distribution**
- **Publicity**
- **Public events**
- **Demonstration lawns**
- **Promotional items**
- **Evaluation**

Your “Don’t Trash Grass” program may be tailored by using and combining the activities presented in this handbook in a way that fits the needs and resources of your community. If available resources do not permit your community to implement a complete program, there is still much benefit to be gained by focusing on one component at a time, such as brochure distribution.



Staffing

A “Don’t Trash Grass” program is most effective with someone to coordinate it. Many of the tasks involved can be accomplished by volunteers, interns or part-time staff. In fact, the more individuals involved, the better, since the central goal of the program is to spread information. But there should be one person coordinating the program to make sure that publicity is submitted to the media with enough lead time, events are scheduled, and tasks are carried out sequentially.

The major tasks involved are likely to include:

- **Obtaining support of the community’s chief elected officials and key administrators**
- **Preparing and distributing information**
- **Informing the media**
- **Contacting and recruiting potential sponsors, speakers, workshop leaders and lawn demonstrators**
- **Organizing events**
- **Evaluating the program**

Although municipal solid waste and/or recycling staff may provide the core “Don’t Trash Grass” organizers, it is advantageous to have part-time or volunteer “specialists” carry out or assist with the tasks. There may be retirees in your community with publicity, management or landscaping experience who would be willing to volunteer their expertise, or students seeking opportunities in the environmental field. Garden clubs and environmental organizations are natural sources of potential assistance.

One of the missions of the State University Cooperative Extension Service is to provide education about horticulture, agriculture and turfgrass management. Ask the Cooperative Extension’s Turfgrass or Agricultural Specialist for your state or region to assist with your program (see Sources of Expertise, p. 17). He/she can probably furnish the names of several experienced individuals or organizations in your area who can offer assistance. You may find that they have been engaged in similar efforts themselves and are willing to join forces with your municipality.

Since individuals in the lawn care industry (e.g., lawn care professionals, landscapers, lawn mower vendors, garden centers, nurseries and commercial turf care specialists) come into contact with a great many people seeking lawn care assistance, encourage them to participate in the program (See Sample Letter to Members of the Lawn Care Industry/Environmental Organizations, p. 23). They may be willing to donate materials, make presentations or help with distribution of information. As local and state governments move to discourage or ban the disposal of grass clippings, options for landscapers and lawn care professionals become fewer and potentially more expensive, creating an incentive for them to encourage “grass recycling”. The less time landscapers spend collecting clippings, the more lawns they can mow per day.

Lawn care professionals and landscapers can also be encouraged to learn how to take advantage of the new business opportunity arising from the professional management of home composting. For people who cannot be convinced to leave clippings on the lawn, home composting is a good alternative. People who do not have the time or inclination may prefer to pay their landscaper to design, build and manage a compost system for them.



Funding

The "Don't Trash Grass" program should be incorporated into and funded as part of the municipality's solid waste program. The cost is low since there are no collection or tipping fees involved. The savings to be gained are substantial because the program can result in a yearly waste disposal reduction of as much as 6% or more. During the growing season, grass clippings can double the amount of residential waste generated. (The actual percentage of grass clippings in the waste stream varies by community and is dependent on demographics, zoning, geographic characteristics, and trash collection method. Nationally, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that approximately 18% of the municipal waste stream is composed of yard waste, a third of which can consist of grass clippings.) Evaluation of your "Don't Trash Grass" program at the end of the season can provide solid evidence that the program is cost effective and worthy of future funding.

A "Don't Trash Grass" program need not be expensive to implement. Coordination of the program is not a full-time job, and depending on the resources available to the coordinator, such as volunteers and outside sponsors, his/her main function could primarily consist of scheduling events and coordinating publicity. In New England, grass clippings are a seasonal concern, further reducing the amount of time needed to run a "Don't Trash Grass" program. The bulk of the work is done in winter and spring, with activities and follow-up at intervals through the summer. To stretch resources and minimize staffing requirements, the "Don't Trash Grass" program can be incorporated into a community's existing home composting, recycling or other public outreach program. Sharing some of the program expenses, such as printing and advertising, on a regional or countywide basis can reduce costs for each community.

Additional funding for the program may be sought from the state and federal governments, public or private foundations, environmental funds, charitable organizations, businesses and local civic groups. For listings of grants and charitable foundations, use the Foundation Directory available at most libraries.



Sponsors

Although existing staff and volunteers may be able to run a “Don’t Trash Grass” program on a shoestring, program-enhancing items such as mulching lawn mowers, lawn signs, fertilizer, printed materials, paid advertising, bumper stickers and T-shirts may require outside financing. One way to obtain such support is to get sponsorship for your “Don’t Trash Grass” program.

Just as many businesses and organizations have in the past benefited from the bagging and disposal of grass clippings, there are many that can benefit from a major change to “grass recycling”—most obviously, mulching lawn mower manufacturers and vendors. Other types of businesses can benefit from the publicity a “Don’t Trash Grass” program generates and may be good potential sponsors. These include garden centers, hardware stores, fertilizer suppliers, landscapers, lawn care professionals, and any business that wants to be associated with promoting environmental causes (see Potential Sponsors, p. 19).

Identify potential sponsors in your community and ask them to help promote the “Don’t Trash Grass” program. You may choose to do an initial mailing (see Sample Letter to Members of Lawn Care Industry/Environmental Organizations, p. 23) followed up by telephone calls. Volunteers or assistants can be particularly helpful here, not only in terms of sharing the work, but also because the more people involved, the more likely someone will have a connection with a potential sponsor. People soliciting sponsorship should point out what the business would gain by helping the program. One example would be the publicity to be received by a sponsor whose name is on a brochure sent to every household in the community.

Sponsors may donate money, materials, advertising, or other types of assistance, such as expertise, labor or use of facilities. Specific material contributions that will add significantly to your program are mulching lawn mowers and slow-release fertilizer. If several sponsors are approached, make sure the effort is coordinated so that complications do not arise from duplicate contributions or from confusion as to how many sponsors there will be. A sponsor should not be led to believe it is the sole sponsor if that is not the case.



TAKING ACTION



The goal of the “Don’t Trash Grass” program is to change public behavior through education. There are countless channels which can be used to increase people’s awareness of environmentally sound lawn care practices.

The following section describes a variety of effective “Don’t Trash Grass” activities. Need, available resources, and existing programs and opportunities in your community will help you determine which to include in your program. Choose those which will yield the most bang for the buck in your community.



Getting the Word Out

Public education is the most essential element of a “Don’t Trash Grass” program. The basic ideas set forth in the program materials must become common knowledge. “Don’t Trash Grass” publicity falls into two categories: distribution of information to the public, and media outreach publicizing the program’s existence, events and results.

Information Distribution

- Mail copies of the “Don’t Trash Grass” brochure to all households (see Materials Available for Public Education, p. 16);
- Incorporate key “Don’t Trash Grass” information and guidelines into yard waste collection schedules or other municipal mailings;
- Make copies of the “Don’t Trash Grass” brochure available at the Town or City Hall, Recycling Center and/or transfer station, and public library;
- Provide the “Don’t Trash Grass” video program to your public library, local access cable TV stations and schools, and publicize its availability (see p. 16);
- Involve lawn care professionals, landscapers, lawn mower vendors, garden centers, nurseries, commercial turf care specialists, the Cooperative Extension Service, civic groups and environmental organizations in distributing information and encouraging participation by the public (see Sample Letter to Lawn Care Industry/Environmental Organizations, p. 23);
- Encourage schools to participate. If the school maintenance workers currently remove clippings from the school yard and playing fields, give the superintendent the “Don’t

Trash Grass” information and ask him/her to implement the program as an example for the students. Many teachers include recycling in their curricula and can simply incorporate into their lessons the fact that leaving grass clippings on the lawn is an easy way to reduce trash. Older students are often responsible for yard work; many have after school jobs cutting neighbors’ lawns. Younger children can pass the information on to their parents.

- Organize a Speakers Bureau from which speakers can be called upon to make presentations at the kickoff and other events in the community. Speakers may be drawn from the Cooperative Extension Service, the lawn care industry, municipal staff, and individuals speaking from experience.

Media Outreach

Media coverage of your “Don’t Trash Grass” program increases your ability to reach large numbers of people. For the program’s events and demonstrations to be effective, the public must know about them. The program as a whole will receive much greater future support if positive results are publicized at the end of the season. To get the most publicity:

- Develop a media contact list. This could include daily and weekly newspapers, radio stations, cable and broadcast television, environmental newsletters, magazines, trade publications and syndicated or local home and garden columnists. You can save time on this if another municipal department or organization already has a media list and shares it with your program.
- Put the information in the appropriate format. For news releases, include all major information in the first paragraph, leaving smaller details for last. Try not to exceed one typed, double-spaced page, clearly listing the name and phone number of the contact person. Use a snappy title. The more newsworthy a press release is, the more likely it will get printed. A quote from the Mayor or other public official gives it more weight. (See Sample Press Release, p. 20)
- Get information to the media with enough lead time, especially if the intention is to publicize a particular event. Be sure you send event publicity to each news media’s weekly events calendar.
- Place newspaper advertisements to promote the “Don’t Trash Grass” program. (See Sample Newspaper Advertisement, p. 21.)
- Send public service announcements (PSAs) to TV and radio stations after contacting each station’s public affairs director (See sample PSA, p. 22). Send your typed PSA in the format requested by the local radio or TV station. TV stations in small markets

will often produce a PSA for you. Radio stations usually supply one of their broadcasters to air your announcement. Local cable stations often have community producers interested in covering local issues and who are willing to produce a show about your community's "Don't Trash Grass" program. The piece could be part of a larger show or series about recycling in your community.

- Follow up with your media contacts. There are many organizations competing for free publicity, and you will have greater success if you follow up your press release or PSA mailing with a friendly phone call. Send a thank you note to the reporter or broadcaster if they publicize your program or event.



Events

Events highlighting the "Don't Trash Grass" program provide active, hands-on opportunities for people to learn about grass recycling and add an element of fun and festivity to your program. They also give the media specific material to cover, increasing publicity for the program.

Kickoff Meeting

A large public meeting which features presentations and demonstrations of the key elements of the program provides a good focal point for your publicity and planning. Such an event establishes the program in the public eye and helps build enough momentum to carry the program through the summer. It also presents an opportunity to recruit people who will follow the "Don't Trash Grass" guidelines and, by their example, demonstrate the results on their lawns. A suggested agenda is as follows:

- Welcome by Mayor, Selectman, or other public official;
- Description of the community's solid waste program by the Public Works Director, Board of Health Chairman, or other municipal official;
- Description of the "Don't Trash Grass Program" by "Don't Trash Grass" coordinator and/or turfgrass specialist;
- "Don't Trash Grass" video presentation;
- Mulching lawn mower demonstration by equipment sponsor;
- Use of slow-release fertilizer presentation by fertilizer sponsor or turf specialist;
- Lawn demonstration program description by volunteer coordinator, explanation of Lawn Demonstrator Application (see Sample Application, p. 24) (Details of the demonstration lawn program are on pp. 11-13);
- Door Prizes (lawn mower, fertilizer, T-shirts, coupons for free lawn mower blade sharpening, bumper stickers, etc.) (See Other Promotional Items, p. 27).

Equipment Demonstration and or Giveaway

If you hold a kickoff meeting, giving a new mulching lawn mower as a door prize can do wonders for attendance. If you are unable to hold a kickoff meeting, but have found someone to donate a mulching lawn mower, hold an equipment demonstration and give away the mower afterwards.

Displays at Traditional Events

Ongoing or traditional events such as Earth Day and Arbor Day celebrations, seasonal fairs and festivals which attract crowds present great opportunities to promote the "Don't Trash Grass" program. Depending upon resources available, you can arrange for a volunteer to staff an informational table, give away promotional materials, and/or demonstrate mulching lawn mowers.

Video Screenings

Show the "Don't Trash Grass" video at every opportunity. Hold separate screenings or feature the video at meetings of other organizations. Let all the relevant boards and committees (public works, parks & recreation, public health, solid waste, recycling, education, conservation, beautification/landscape, civic) know about the availability of the video. Have it aired on local public access cable TV and place copies in libraries and schools.

Presentations, Clinics, Field Days

You may receive requests for "Don't Trash Grass" presentations from environmental organizations, garden clubs, civic groups, etc. The simplest presentation is to show the "Don't Trash Grass" video and answer questions. Information in the "Don't Trash Grass" brochure and Commonly Asked Questions and Answers About Lawn Care (p. 18) may be used as a basis for the presentation.

If you have established a "Don't Trash Grass" Speakers Bureau, your program will be able to offer a wider variety of presentations. Plan the focus of the workshops or clinics according to the knowledge and experience of the speakers. For example, a Cooperative Extension Turfgrass Specialist may offer a clinic on lawn maintenance, explaining the "Don't Trash Grass" guidelines and answering questions. A lawn mower distributor may volunteer to hold an open house and demonstrate the various types of mulching lawn mowers. A field day could be held at a local golf course or turf farm with a presentation by the turf manager on techniques used by professionals.

Take advantage of the location of the presentations. Try to hold them at places which offer an educational and pleasant experience for the audience, such as a park, golf course, turf farm, etc. The best place is one which is, in itself, an illustration of good turf management (where clippings are not collected), such as your community's public demonstration lawn (see Demonstration Lawns, p. 11).



Demonstration Lawns

Seeing is believing. Lawns where the “Don’t Trash Grass” guidelines are followed — marked with a “Don’t Trash Grass” lawn sign — in various neighborhoods throughout your community can be the most effective means of convincing residents that leaving clippings on the lawn results in healthy, good looking lawns.

Every community can easily have at least one demonstration lawn by establishing it on highly visible municipal property, such as in front of the town or city hall, library, common or park. If the area previously had clippings removed and disposed, gaining the support of the grounds keepers will be necessary. Not only will your community be educating employees and passers-by, it will also save on disposal costs, and the lawn will benefit from the nutrients and increased organic matter in the soil.

Setting up a volunteer lawn demonstration program may require additional planning, coordination and monitoring, but like the rest of the “Don’t Trash Grass” program, the lawn demonstration component can be simplified to accommodate available resources. Although it may not be feasible to include a full-blown lawn demonstration component in your community’s “Don’t Trash Grass” program this year, it is an excellent goal to work towards and can be one of the most productive elements of a “Don’t Trash Grass” program.

No-Frills Volunteer Lawn Demonstration

You will need:

- Volunteers
- Lawn signs (see p. 27)

Anyone who follows the “Don’t Trash Grass” guidelines can be a lawn demonstrator. All they need is a sign placed in the yard to let passers-by know theirs is a “Don’t Trash Grass” lawn and a willingness to tell their friends and neighbors about their experience.

The kickoff meeting is a good place to recruit volunteer lawn demonstrators. Lawns in high visibility areas make the best demonstrations. Lawn signs can be given out at the meeting, along with “Don’t Trash Grass” brochures that demonstrators can pass on to interested neighbors and passers-by.

Full-blown Volunteer Lawn Demonstration

A simple lawn demonstration program can be expanded to include incentives for increased public participation and to provide survey information for program evaluation.

You will need:

- Volunteers
- Lawn signs
- Incentives (free fertilizer, discounts, use of mulching lawn mowers) (See Potential Sponsors, p. 19)
- Lawn demonstrator application forms (See sample, p. 24)
- Lawn demonstrator acceptance and "no thank you" letters (See samples, pp. 25-26)
- Coordination between material donors and demonstrators
- Survey forms to be distributed, collected and tabulated (See Sample Survey Form, p. 30)
- Publicity of results

The nature of a full-blown lawn demonstration program will depend upon what incentives are available. The most common donation is slow-release fertilizer. Many people who leave grass clippings on their lawns find that their lawns look great without any additional fertilizer because the clippings contain all the necessary nutrients. If fertilizer is used, however, at least 50% of its nitrogen should be water insoluble (slow-release). This results in a high quality lawn without bursts of excessive growth. In addition to creating an incentive for people to apply to become demonstrators, the donated fertilizer helps demonstrate the value of using better quality, slow-release fertilizer.

Mulching lawn mowers may also be used as an educational incentive for volunteer lawn demonstrators. Local lawn mower dealers as well as national manufacturers may be interested in supporting your program. Greenfield, Wisconsin worked out an arrangement with a manufacturer to provide mulching lawn mowers to volunteer lawn demonstrators free of charge for one season. At the end of the season, volunteers had the option to purchase the mowers at a discount.

Recruit volunteer lawn demonstrators at the kickoff meeting. Applications may be made available at the sign-in desk. The details of the program should be explained as part of the meeting agenda and applications collected at the end of the meeting. Your program may be able to accommodate all volunteers who apply, but if incentive materials are limited, you will

need to have a selection process (see Sample Lawn Demonstrator Application, Acceptance and “No Thank You” letters, pp. 24-26).

- Establish and explain the selection criteria at the meeting.
- Let applicants know that they will be expected to complete and return surveys during and/or after the season. (Sample Survey Form, p. 30).
- Tell them who to contact with problems or questions.

After the meeting, the “Don’t Trash Grass” coordinator or committee should review the applications and send out the acceptance or “no thank you” letters. Instructions for using the fertilizer, lawn mower, or other donated materials should be included, as well as the location and agreed pickup dates for obtaining the donated material. If lawn signs are not distributed at the kickoff meeting, they may be picked up along with the donated material. These arrangements will need to be made with the dealer by the “Don’t Trash Grass” coordinator.

A very successful lawn demonstrator program has been run for several years in Texas by the Texas A & M University Agricultural Extension Service. Survey results from this program have given many other communities the impetus to start similar programs. Contact the Texas Agricultural Extension Service for more details on their “Don’t Bag It” program (see References, p. 28).



TOOLS



Timeline/Checklist

A “Don’t Trash Grass” program can be started any time during the growing season. The following timeline/checklist provides guidance for including all the activities described. Select those which apply to your program now, and add to it as momentum builds. Save time and resources by combining the planning, organizational and publicity tasks with your community’s existing recycling and composting programs. Remember, necessity is the mother of invention. Encourage your community to come up with its own unique way of getting out the “Don’t Trash Grass” message.

Late Winter-Early Spring

- Choose a “Don’t Trash Grass” coordinator.
- Establish a “Don’t Trash Grass” committee.
 - Contact Cooperative Extension Turfgrass Specialist and Lawn Care Associations to elicit support.
 - Obtain support of community’s chief elected officials and key administrators.
 - Encourage participation of recycling/composting committee members.
 - Encourage participation by members of other community organizations.
- Set goals. Choose activities for the season.
- Develop or obtain media contact list.
- Send letter to members of the lawn care industry to solicit donations, sponsorship, and/or speakers.
- Follow up by telephone to obtain specific commitments.
- Print or copy “Don’t Trash Grass” brochure for distribution.
- Obtain copy(ies) of “Don’t Trash Grass” video.
- Establish Speakers Bureau.
- Plan kickoff meeting; choose date, location, agenda, speakers, promotional items, etc.

Spring

- Send out publicity announcing your community’s “Don’t Trash Grass” program and kickoff meeting.
- Mail brochures to households; include kickoff event details.

- Plan workshop, clinic, field day, or other educational event so it can be publicized at kickoff meeting.
- Identify community events, such as Earth Day or Arbor Day celebrations at which the "Don't Trash Grass" information can be promoted. Contact the organizers to make arrangements.
- Order lawn signs for distribution at kickoff meeting.
- Plan lawn demonstrator program for kickoff meeting.
 - Arrange pickup schedule/location for donated materials.
 - Develop and/or copy materials to be given out at kickoff meeting:
 - brochures
 - lawn demonstrator applications
 - publicity for future events
 - promotional items (door prizes)
- Hold kickoff meeting.
- Review lawn demonstrator applications and choose demonstration lawns. Send acceptance / "no thank you" letters to applicants.
- Contact local school superintendents to encourage participation.

Late Spring

- Have "Don't Trash Grass" video aired on local cable channel.
- Place copy of video in public library and schools.
- Publicize the availability of the video to the public and to organizations that may wish to show it at meetings or events.
- Establish demonstration lawn on community property.
- Offer workshop/clinic/equipment demonstration (ongoing)
- Make other promotional items available, such as bumper stickers and T-shirts (ongoing)

Summer

- Provide assistance to lawn demonstrators.
- Produce and send surveys to lawn demonstrators.

Late Summer

- Tabulate surveys.
- Publicize results.



Resources

Materials Available for Public Education

The Connecticut and Massachusetts Departments of Environmental Protection have cooperatively produced a series of "Don't Trash Grass" public education materials for use in New England with funding provided, in part, by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region I. They include:

- a brochure;
- a 12-minute video program;
- a pre-recorded radio public service announcement (PSA); and
- this community action handbook.

Each New England state has been sent an individualized master copy of each item. Contact your state's agency listed below for information on how these materials may be made available to your community.

State Environmental Agencies

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
Recycling Program
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106
(203) 566-8722

Maine Waste Management Agency
Office of Waste Reduction/Recycling
State House Station #154
Augusta, ME 04333
(207) 289-5300

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Solid Waste Management
One Winter St., 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 292-5960

New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
Waste Management Division
6 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 271-2901

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
Office of Environmental Coordination
83 Park Street
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 277-3434

Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation
Recycling Section
103 South Main Street
Waterbury, VT 05676
1-800-932-7100 (in Vermont)
(802) 244-7831 (outside Vermont)

Sources of Expertise

The following organizations specialize in providing technical assistance on turfgrass maintenance. They may be able to provide you with speakers, additional information, and leads on potential "Don't Trash Grass" program sponsors for your community.

State University Cooperative Extension Services

Connecticut

University of Connecticut
Cooperative Extension System
College of Agriculture and
Natural Resources
1276 Storrs Rd.
Storrs, CT 06269-4036
(203) 486-6271

Maine

University of Maine
Cooperative Extension Service
5741 Libby Hall
Orono, ME 04469-5741
(207) 581-3186

Massachusetts

University of Massachusetts
Cooperative Extension Service
Central MA Extension Center
812 Millbury St.
Worcester, MA 01607
Turfgrass Extension Specialist:
Mary Owen
(508) 831-1225

New Hampshire

University of New Hampshire
Cooperative Extension
Plant Biology Department
131 Main St. , Nesmith Hall
Durham, NH 03824-3597
Turfgrass Extension Specialist:
John Roberts
(603) 862-3202

Rhode Island

University of Rhode Island
Cooperative Extension
238 Woodward Hall
Department of Plant Science
Kingston, RI 02881
Turfgrass Specialist: Bridget Ruemmele
(401) 792-2481

Vermont

University of Vermont Extension System
Associate Director's Office
Morrill Hall
Burlington, VT 05405-0106
(802) 656-2990

Professional Lawn Care Associations

Connecticut Grounds Keepers
Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 873
Bethel, CT 06801-0876
(203) 791-8615

Professional Lawn Maintenance
Association of Connecticut (PLMAC)
P.O. Box 11
Watertown, CT 06795
(203) 274-0608
Gary Stewart, President

Massachusetts Association of
Lawn Care Professionals
P.O. Box 533
Belmont, MA 02178
(617) 748-8701 / (508) 287-0127
Karen Connelly, Exec. Dir.

Ecological Landscaping Association
P.O. Box 572
Groton, MA 01450
(617) 436-5838
Mike Talbot, Coordinator

Commonly Asked Questions and Answers about Lawn Care



The following information is based upon turfgrass maintenance research conducted at the University of Connecticut, as well as materials cited in the References on p. 28.

1. Do grass clippings cause thatch?

No. Thatch is an accumulation of the “woody” parts of the grass plant: the stems, roots and stolons, not the clippings. Thatch is most often caused by overfertilizing and overwatering. If your lawn has more than 1/2" of thatch, the lawn should be dethatched. The waste material this generates may be composted. Try to identify and change the maintenance practices that led to thatch accumulation.

2. What happens to clippings left on the lawn?

Grass clippings are approximately 80% moisture. When this moisture evaporates, only a very small bit of organic material remains. This reaches the soil and becomes food for soil organisms. The organisms convert the nutrients contained in the clippings to a form plants can utilize. Research conducted at the University of Connecticut indicates that leaving clippings on lawns decreases the incidence of some turf diseases.

3. Isn't it more work to mow the lawn often enough to keep the clippings short?

No. Cutting grass before it is overgrown is easier and faster. Eliminating the time and effort it takes to bag clippings further shortens the mowing time. Lawn demonstrators from the Texas “Don't Bag It” program reported a 38% overall reduction in the amount of time spent mowing, even though they mowed more frequently (about one more mowing per month).

4. What if my lawn grows too high between mowings to leave the clippings?

You have several options. You may mow over the clippings to further shred and scatter them. You may collect the long clippings and compost them or use them as mulch after they dry out. You may raise the mower height so that only the top third of the blade will be removed, then gradually lower it over a span of several mowings to prevent shock to the plants.

5. I like the idea of recycling grass clippings, but don't like the way clippings look on my lawn. What can be done about that?

Mow often enough so that the clippings do not exceed 1" in length. Short clippings fall between the grass blades and seem to disappear. Mulching mowers take advantage of this process by cutting clippings into tiny pieces and blowing them towards the soil. Alternatively, compost the clippings or use them for mulch.

6. How often should I water my lawn?

In New England, natural precipitation provides enough water for survival of turfgrass. Lawns may turn brown and dormant during periods of drought, but will turn green rapidly when moisture in the soil is replaced. If you feel you must water your lawn, see the watering recommendations in the “Don't Trash Grass” pamphlet.

7. Do I need a mulching mower to leave clippings on the lawn?

No. If you have a side discharge mower, close the discharge chute. You may need to obtain a special safety plug. Mulching blades or adaptor kits are available for many types of lawn mowers. When it is time to replace your mower, consider purchasing a mulching mower.

Potential Sponsors

The following businesses have expressed interest in supporting a community "Don't Trash Grass" program. Add to this list by checking with businesses and organizations in your area.

Equipment Manufacturers

American Honda Motor Corp.
Power Equipment Division
Bill Faille, Eastern Zone Mgr.
1500 Morrison Parkway
Alpharetta, GA 30201
(404) 442-2014

John Deere
Lawn and Grounds Care Division
Bob Tracinski, Manager, Public Relations
P.O. Box 29533
Raleigh, NC 27626-0533
(919) 954-6420

Snapper Lawn Mower Products
Tony Troisi, Owner
KPM Distributors, Inc.
P.O. Box N
Kenvil, NJ 07847
(201) 584-5400

The Toro Company
Public Affairs Department
8111 Lyndale Ave.
South Bloomington, MN 55420-1196
1-800-348-2424

Troy-Bilt Products
Ned Van Woer
Sr. VP Strategic Planning
Garden Way, Inc.
102nd Street and Ninth Avenue
Troy, NY 12180
(518) 235-6010

White Outdoor Products Co.
Sales Promotion Department
P.O. Box 361131
Cleveland, OH 44136
(216) 273-7786

Fertilizer Suppliers

Agriturf, Inc.
59 Dwight Street
Hatfield, MA 01038
(413) 247-5687

Grace Sierra Horticultural Products
1001 Yosemite Drive
Milpitas, CA 95035
(408) 263-8080 / 1-800-492-8255

The Scott Corp.
14111 Scottslawn Road
Marysville, OH 43041
1-800-221-6220

Local Contacts

Add names and numbers of businesses in your area that have expressed interest in supporting a "Don't Trash Grass" program.

Sample Press Release

Use this press release as is by filling in the brackets with your program's information, or revise it as appropriate.

FOR RELEASE: (Date)

CONTACT: NAME _____

PHONE _____

MAYOR ANNOUNCES "DON'T TRASH GRASS" PROGRAM

At a press conference held at the [city/town]'s [landfill/composting/area recycling center/transfer station] Mayor[_____] today launched the "Don't Trash Grass" program. Promoted by the [_____(State Environmental Agency)], the program aims to reduce solid waste in the [landfill/resource recovery facility/incinerator] by encouraging citizens to leave their grass clippings on the lawn.

"We are committed to this project for three reasons," said Mayor [_____]. "First, individuals can help preserve our environment while saving [disposal capacity/space in the landfill]. Second, we will help save natural resources by using less water and chemicals on our lawns. Third, it requires less work for residents and for city crews, reducing the cost of lawn maintenance to homeowners and the cost of collection and disposal for the city."

The [City/Town] of [_____] will kick off the "Don't Trash Grass" program at a public meeting on [_____(date)], at [_____(location)] from [_____(time) to_____]. Residents can learn how the program works and have a chance to win [a new mulching lawn mower/promotional item (if donations are obtained)] being given away by [manufacturer]. "Grass clippings can significantly increase the volume of solid waste during the summer", said[_____], Director of [Solid Waste Management/Recycling] at the [Department of Environmental Protection (state environmental agency)] "Leaving them on the lawn returns valuable nutrients to the soil and reduces municipal disposal costs", [he/she] said.

For more information on the "Don't Trash Grass" lawn care plan, contact [_____("Don't Trash Grass" coordinator)] at [_____(telephone)].

Sample Newspaper Advertisement

DON'T TRASH GRASS!

(Logo Here)

Did you know that a half acre lawn in New England produces over three tons or nearly 360 bags of grass clippings each year? Think of all the time, money and effort it would take to bag all those clippings. Why go through all that hassle when it's really not necessary?

Recycling grass clippings back into your lawn makes more sense. It eliminates the burdensome chore of bagging and saves millions of dollars in disposal costs each year.

It's simple! Take the grass catcher off your mower and leave the clippings where they fall! Keep your lawn mowed to 2" - 3" tall and don't remove more than 1/3 of the grass blade in any single mowing.

Grass clippings act as a natural organic fertilizer, returning nitrogen and other nutrients to your lawn. And don't worry, turf experts agree that grass clippings do not produce thatch.

So "Don't Trash Grass"- recycle it into your lawn instead!


Leave Grass clippings on your lawn for greener, healthier turf.

Use this space for your community name and instructions on where to get more information on the "Don't Trash Grass" program.

DON'T TRASH GRASS!

Did you know that a half acre lawn in New England produces over three tons or nearly 360 bags of grass clippings each year? Think of all the time, money and effort it would take to bag all those clippings. Why go through all that hassle when it's really not necessary?

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It's simple! Take the grass catcher off of your mower and leave the clippings where they fall! Keep your lawn mowed to 2"-3" tall, and don't remove more than 1/3 of the grass blade in any single mowing.

Grass clippings act as a natural organic fertilizer returning nitrogen and other nutrients to your lawn. And don't worry, turf experts agree that grass clippings do not produce thatch.

So "Don't Trash Grass"—recycle it into your lawn instead!

**Leave grass clippings on your lawn
for greener, healthier turf.**

Use this space for your community name and instructions on where to get more information on the "Don't Trash Grass" program.

Sample Public Service Announcements



Public service announcements (PSA's) are used to fill "windows" of air space between paid advertising and programming on radio and television. The most commonly used PSA's are 10, 20, 30 or 60 seconds in length. Contact a station's Public Affairs Director for details about format and lead time required. Radio stations will generally supply one of their broadcasters to air your announcement. There is no charge to air PSA's, but not all radio stations play them, and there are many organizations competing for air time on the stations that do. Follow up with the Public Affairs Director after sending out your announcement to increase the likelihood of its being aired.

A prerecorded "Don't Trash Grass" radio PSA master, from which copies can be made, has been sent to your state environmental agency. The PSA tells people where to get "Don't Trash Grass" information in your state. Contact your state environmental agency for details on obtaining a copy (see p. 16).

Below are sample PSA texts of each length with a choice of two different endings. Select phrase A or B or insert your own information depending on what aspect of the program you wish to publicize. Estimate 20-30 words for a 10-second spot, 40-50 words for a 20-second spot, 60-80 words for a 30-second spot, and 150 words for a 60-second spot.

60 second:

Don't trash grass! Grass clippings contain all the nutrients your turf needs to be strong and healthy. You can put those nutrients back into your lawn by leaving short clippings where they fall. Your lawn will be healthy and green, and you will save time, energy, money and resources. At the same time, you will be helping to reduce the amount of garbage (your community) must pay to dispose. To learn more, come to (city/town's) "Don't Trash Grass" public kickoff meeting on (date) from (start time) to (end time) at (location). You'll have chance to win a new (mulching lawn mower/other incentive)! To receive a free brochure on how you can have healthy lawn and less trash, write to: (your address). If you follow the "Don't Trash Grass" guidelines, you'll never have to bag grass clippings again!

30 second:

Don't trash grass! Save time, energy, money and resources by recycling your grass clippings back into the lawn. It's easy! (Insert phrase A or B below).

- A. [For a free brochure on how you can have a healthy lawn and less trash, write to: (your address). If you follow the "Don't Trash Grass" guidelines, you'll never have to bag grass clippings again!]
- B. [To learn more about lawn care, come to (city town's) "Don't Trash Grass" public kickoff meeting on (date) from (start time) to (end time) at (location). You'll have chance to win a (incentive)!]

20 second:

Don't trash grass clippings, recycle them into your lawn! (Insert phrase A or B above).

10 second:

Don't trash grass! (Insert phrase A or B below)

- A. [For information on how to recycle grass clippings, write to:]
- B. [Learn how to recycle it at (city town's) "Don't Trash Grass" public kickoff meeting on (date) from (start time) to (end time) at (location).]

Sample Letter to Members of Lawn Care Industry and Environmental Organizations

This letter may be used to encourage participation in the program by lawn care professionals and/or environmental organizations.

Your community's letterhead

(Date)

To Whom It May Concern:

The (City/Town of _____) is organizing a "Don't Trash Grass" public education program to encourage residents to keep grass clippings out of the waste stream and take advantage of the nutrients they contain by leaving the clippings on the lawn or composting them at home.

(City/Town's) "Don't Trash Grass" Committee welcomes your involvement in the program. Enclosed you will find a "Don't Trash Grass" brochure which describes the lawn care guidelines we are promoting. You can participate in the "Don't Trash Grass" program simply by passing the information contained in the pamphlet on to the public in the course of your work and encouraging people to recycle their grass clippings by leaving them on the lawn, adding them to a compost pile or using them as mulch. Grass clippings are too valuable a source of nitrogen and organic matter to bag and throw away.

As part of the program, the city/town is establishing a Speakers Bureau to provide speakers for "Don't Trash Grass" events to be held later this year or upon request from other organizations. If you have experience with the lawn care guidelines described in the brochure or related topics such as composting, natural landscaping, integrated pest management, horticulture, etc., and are interested in joining the "Don't Trash Grass" Speakers Bureau, contact me at (telephone number).

Please pass the "Don't Trash Grass" message on to the membership of any professional associations or organizations to which you belong. Your organization may wish to take advantage of the Speakers Bureau and offer a "Don't Trash Grass" presentation to its membership. Contact the "Don't Trash Grass" coordinator to request a presentation. A twelve minute "Don't Trash Grass" video tape is available for your use by (insert information on how the video may be obtained in your community, e.g., borrowing it from the public library).

Thank you in advance for your interest and participation in the "Don't Trash Grass" program. Together we can reduce the amount of waste requiring disposal while making better use of our natural resources.

Sincerely,

("Don't Trash Grass" Coordinator)

Sample "Don't Trash Grass" Lawn Demonstrator Application

This application is designed to aid in the selection and tracking of "Don't Trash Grass" lawn demonstrators. The information requested enables the program coordinator or extension agent to determine fertilizer type, quantity and application schedule needed by the applicant. If your program is using mulching mowers or another incentive, you may need to request different or additional information. This sample also includes questions which can help you to select a cross-section of demonstrators for end-of-the-season program evaluation.

"Don't Trash Grass" Lawn Demonstrator Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone Number:(_____) _____

Date: _____

1. Do you bag your grass clippings? _____
2. If yes, estimate number of bags per week _____
3. What is the approximate size of your lawn? _____ sq. ft.
4. What type of lawn?: _____ Kentucky Bluegrass _____ Fescue _____ Ryegrass
_____ Combination _____ Don't know/other
5. When was the last time you applied fertilizer? _____
6. What kind? (N-P-K analysis) _____ Amount _____ Don't know _____
7. How often do you lime your lawn? _____
8. Do you water your lawn? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, how often? _____
9. Do you compost your grass clippings? _____
10. Do you agree to follow the "Don't Trash Grass" guidelines during this growing season and return a short survey on your experiences? Yes _____ No _____

Thank you! Please return this form at the end of the meeting or mail it by (date) to:

("Don't Trash Grass" Coordinator Address)

Sample "Don't Trash Grass" Lawn Demonstration Acceptance Letter

This letter is designed for a "Don't Trash Grass" program that distributes slow-release fertilizer. If your program is using mulching lawn mowers or other incentives, replace the fertilizer section with information relevant to your program. You may enclose a sample survey (see p. 30) with the letter so participants will know what they should be making note of during the mowing season.

Your community's letterhead

(Date)

Dear "Don't Trash Grass" Demonstrator:

Congratulations, you have been selected to be one of (city/town)'s "Don't Trash Grass" lawn demonstrators. We ask that you follow the guidelines in the "Don't Trash Grass" brochure as closely as possible this year. The results you obtain will serve to demonstrate the value of the program to you friends and neighbors. In this way you will help (city/town) spread the "Don't Trash Grass" message and reduce its waste stream.

Based on the size of your lawn and the type of grass, we have determined that you will need (number) bags of (brand name) (analysis) fertilizer for the coming year. This fertilizer has been donated to the program by (fertilizer sponsor) and will be available for your pick up at (store), located at (address). Present this letter to (name) to receive your fertilizer.

The following pick up dates, fertilizer application dates and application amounts have been determined for your lawn.

<u>Pickup Date</u>	<u>No. of Bags</u>	<u>Application Date</u>	<u>Application Amount</u>
--------------------	--------------------	-------------------------	---------------------------

When you pick up your first bag of fertilizer you will also receive a "Don't Trash Grass" lawn sign. Please place it so people passing by will know that it is a "Don't Trash Grass" lawn. At the end of the summer you will receive [or: Enclosed is] a questionnaire. It is very important to the program that you complete and return the form. Your experiences and comments will be used to help us evaluate and publicize the results of the program.

If you have any questions about your role as a demonstrator, the "Don't Trash Grass" guidelines, or have any problems with the program, please call (name) at (phone number). You may withdraw your name by calling the same number.

Thank you for helping (city town) demonstrate that lawns can be well maintained by recycling grass clippings rather than bagging them for disposal.

Sincerely,

("Don't Trash Grass" Coordinator)

Sample Lawn Demonstrator “No Thank You” Letter

You may not need to reject anyone who volunteers to be “Don’t Trash Grass” lawn demonstrator, but if the number of applicants exceeds the number of lawn signs and incentives available for your program, here is a sample “no thank you” letter. If fertilizer application rates have been calculated for all the applicants, you may want to include such information in the letter.

Your community’s letterhead

(Date)

Dear Friend:

As we indicated at our “Don’t Trash Grass” kickoff meeting, we expected that many more people would apply to become lawn demonstrators than we could supply with (material). That certainly proved to be true. We regret that your lawn was not selected. That does not mean that we don’t welcome your participation in the program. We just did not have enough (material) to meet all the requests.

By following the guidelines in the “Don’t Trash Grass” brochure and letting your friends and neighbors know of your experiences, you will be doing a great deal to help preserve our environment and reduce (city /town)'s waste stream.

Thank you for attending the kickoff meeting, and if you have any questions, please feel free to call (name) at (phone number).

Sincerely,

(“Don't Trash Grass” Coordinator)

Lawn Signs

Lawn signs notify passersby that clippings are not removed from the lawn, advertise the “Don’t Trash Grass” program, and let people know who to contact for more information.

The phrase “Don’t Trash Grass Demonstration Lawn” is the most important information to include on the signs. The “Don’t Trash Grass” logo used on this handbook may be used for consistency and recognition when designing your signs. If space permits, the signs should also bullet the benefits of recycling grass clippings into the lawn and include a name or telephone number to contact for more information.



Sign production can be costly, but there may be less expensive options. For example, some printing services have the capability of designing a sign on computer and printing it out on 11" X 17" paper. This could be wrapped in plastic or laminated and attached to recycled wooden stakes. High schools often have graphics departments and laminating machines. Color photocopies are another option, once a master is produced. You could also look into the cost of having custom signs made by a company that produces plastic nursery signs.

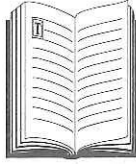
Other Promotional Items

Many promotional items may be used to increase enthusiasm and recognition for your program. As with lawn signs, the “Don’t Trash Grass” logo developed for this program may be used for consistency when designing or ordering other promotional items. In addition to mulching lawn mowers and fertilizer, examples of items used in other “grass recycling” public education programs include:

- Coupons for discounts on goods or services (lawn mower blade sharpening, for example)
- Bumper stickers
- T-shirts
- Buttons
- Gardening books
- Grass seed
- Painter caps
- Coffee mugs
- Window decals
- Magnets
- Posters
- Banners

Many of the above items may be donated by local sponsors.

References



The following materials were used in the production of this handbook. Many of the people who authored these materials have also conducted similar lawn maintenance programs in other parts of the country and may be able to provide you with additional information based on their experiences.

- “Don’t Bag It: Lawn Care Plan”, 1991. Written by Bill Knoop, Texas A & M University System, College Station, Texas. Produced by and available from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, 17360 Coit Rd. Dallas, Texas 75252, (214) 231-5362.

Bill Knoop pioneered the “Don’t Bag It” program in Texas and will provide promotional materials to others for as long as they remain available. These materials are specific to the climate and turfgrasses of Texas and may not be directly applicable to those of New England.

- “GRASSCYCLING Today’s Turf-Tomorrow’s Earth: Community Action Plan”, 1991. Produced by and available from the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, 1000 Johnson Ferry Road, N.E., Suite C-135, Marietta, Georgia 30068-2112, (404) 977-5222. \$5.00.

In addition to the Community Action Plan, PLCAA also offers for sale support materials for “Grasscycling” programs such as brochures, bumper stickers, and decals. Contact the Director of Public Relations at the above number for ordering information.

- “Just Mow It! How to Establish a Grass Recycling Program in Your Community”, 1993. Produced by the New York State Department of Economic Development, Office of Recycling Market Development, One Commerce Plaza, Albany, New York 12245, (518) 486-6291.

In addition to information on how to conduct a community grass recycling program, this guide also includes success stories from across the United States.

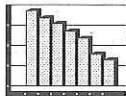
- “Lawn Mowing and Efficient Watering” Grounds Maintenance Fact Sheet L-551, Cooperative Extension, University of Massachusetts, prepared by Dr. Richard J. Cooper, Turfgrass Specialist, University of Massachusetts, Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, Amherst, MA 01003-0099.

- “Passaic County Yard-fest Programs”, 1992. Produced by Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Passaic County Office of Recycling and Solid Waste Programs and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Office of Recycling. Passaic County Planning Board, County Administration Bldg., 317 Pennsylvania Ave. Paterson, New Jersey 07503, (201) 305-5738.

Overview, description, materials used and results of Passaic County’s three year research project and outreach effort to promote the “Grass, Cut It And Leave It” program.

- “Turfgrass Clipping Management”, a study in progress being conducted by the University of Connecticut, Department of Plant Science. Dr. William M. Dest, Turfgrass Specialist. Personal correspondence. Projected publication date: June, 1993.

EVALUATING THE PROGRAM



Methods

Evaluating your “Don’t Trash Grass” program is important. It may enable you to determine how much waste was diverted from disposal through the program and what this represents in terms of savings to the community. This information can provide solid evidence that the program is cost effective and should be included in the community’s solid waste budget. Being able to measure the results of the program will also provide newsworthy material for subsequent media promotion.

There are a couple of ways to evaluate the program. One is to compare the tonnage of grass which the community disposes before and after the program. Alternatively, participants in the program may be surveyed (see Sample Survey, p. 30). Give out the survey at the kickoff meeting or mail it during or at the end of the summer. Provide a return address and date by which it should be returned. A self addressed stamped return envelope encourages a good response rate.

When the surveys come in, they will need to be tabulated. The surveys are short and simple, so this process should not be overly time consuming. The results may enable you to estimate the number of bags kept out of the waste stream for those who formally participated. From this information you may be able to extrapolate to the rest of the community, thereby obtaining potential diversion rate for grass clippings which may not be obtainable from community disposal records.

Sample Lawn Demonstrator Survey Form

The following evaluation form has been used to evaluate and publicize the results of the "Don't Bag It" program in Texas. It has proven to be invaluable in promoting the program.

Your community's letterhead

(Date)

Dear "Don't Trash Grass" Lawn Demonstrator:

Please complete the following survey. Your answers will be helpful in evaluating and promoting the "Don't Trash Grass" program.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____

1. What is the approximate size of your lawn? _____ sq.ft.
2. How long did it take you to mow your lawn (in minutes)?
Before "Don't Trash Grass" _____ After "Don't Trash Grass" _____
3. During the growing season how many times per month did/do you mow your lawn?
Before "Don't Trash Grass" _____ After "Don't Trash Grass" _____
4. What percentage of your grass clippings were/are:
 - a. Bagged/disposed _____ (before) _____ (after)
 - b. Composted _____ (before) _____ (after)
5. Estimate the number of bags your lawn would produce each week if/when you bagged your clippings _____ bags.
6. Please rate the quality of your lawn.
(Circle one item for 'Before' and one item for 'After'.)

Before "Don't Trash Grass"	After "Don't Trash Grass"
a. Poor	a. Poor
b. Fair	b. Fair
c. Good	c. Good
d. Excellent	d. Excellent
7. Would you recommend "Don't Trash Grass" to others? _____ Yes _____ No
8. Do you plan to continue to follow the "Don't Trash Grass" guidelines next year?
_____ Yes _____ No

This concludes our survey. Thank you for your time. If there are points about the "Don't Trash Grass" program we have not covered that you wish to comment on, please use the space below or the reverse side of this page.

Please return this form by (date) to: (address)

WRAPPING UP



Publicize the Results

Once you have obtained results from your program, publicize them. Try to phrase the results in a way that people can visualize, such as “(number) bags of clippings were kept out of the landfill/incinerator through the program.” If the program saved your community disposal costs, highlight that information. If there were other benefits or interesting comments from participants, make note of them.

Send the results to the media contacts you have made during the year. Tonnage diverted, dollars saved and enthusiastic quotes from participants will be of interest to the media. Take advantage of potential media coverage to build public support for next year's program.



Celebrate

Congratulations! You and your staff, volunteers, sponsors and supporters have made a substantial contribution to the environmental and economic well-being of your community through the “Don't Trash Grass” program. In addition to the savings your community has realized, the rewards of your efforts include the knowledge that your entire community is contributing to a long-term, environmentally sound way of life. Your successes, coupled with those of other communities, will make a major environmental impact.

Reward yourself and all the people who made your program a success with an end-of-the-season celebration. Fund it with donations collected throughout the season. Invite the community to “pat themselves on the back” for taking a pro-active approach to environmental problems. Include the public in the celebration and thank them for their participation.



