



## **Tipp City Operations and Clean Rivers**

Tipp City is located on one of the area's main rivers, The Great Miami River. You all know that. It may be one of the reasons that you live here. It is the main reason that Tipp City is where it is. We have a natural inclination to keep it clean. This article is intended to inform you about some of the things the City does to keep it clean.

For example in a typical year we clean and check about 340 catch basins. They get loaded up with silt, sand, bottle caps, debris, and leaves; none of which is good for the river. The City removes all this waste material from each manhole and catch basin. Some require more time than others, but they all need attention. For the last several years the Ohio EPA has required an annual report from cities documenting river related activities like this that the City does.

In the Fall, the City collects leaves, typically about 320 truckloads of leaves per year. Since homeowners want to collect them and have them removed from their properties, the City does perform this service. But we continue to recommend (as does the EPA) that leaves be chopped up with the lawn mower until they disappear into the grass and then left in place. This practice adds humus to the soil and keeps the lawn looking better with less water. You may be surprised to know that Scotts (the fertilizer company with headquarters here in Ohio) recommends this practice also. They have actually reduced the phosphorous in their lawn fertilizers on the assumption that most people get all the lawn phosphorus they need from the recycled leaves on their lawn. The number of loads of leaves collected each year by the City must also be reported to the EPA. They want to see a declining number.

In the Winter, the City spreads 400 to 500 tons of salt per year on its 154 "lane-miles" of roadway. None of this salt is good for the river, but winter driving and automobile safety requires the use of salt. Both the City and the State EPA are concerned about the amount of salt required each year, so that is another item that must be reported annually to the EPA. Again, they wish to see a declining number. Some Cities purchase special trucks with a built-in GPS and salt weighing system to document the exact amount of salt spread on each segment of road lane. Tipp City does its best to keep track of the use of salt on each road in the city, and we use some of the latest techniques to minimize the amount of salt needed by adding grit to the salt, pre-wetting the salt (so that it sticks to the road better), and using beet juice to pretreat the roads when a big snow is expected.

The City has 436 acres in 17 parks, and in the Summer we mow approximately 240 acres of lawn, including open space, soccer & baseball fields. This needs to be reported to the EPA, too, since mowing often leads to removal of grass clippings. We do not remove grass, except in rare circumstances. We keep the grass tall which helps it to stay lush and green, even during the dry times. We minimize the use of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides; none of these are good for the waterways or for the humans that use the parks. Any that we do use, must be reported to the EPA.

Many of these issues that can hurt the rivers and streams are not only good for the City to ponder. Most of these issues relate to private property owners, large and small, as well. We should all be reducing salt use as much as possible in winter, reducing mowing in the Summer, chopping up leaves in the fall and leaving them on the lawn, and avoiding the use of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides, wherever possible, not only to help keep the rivers healthy, but to help reduce our costs.

