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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mowing season offers chances to keep creeks clean

MURPHY (February 9, 2016) The relative quiet of weekend mornings will soon be broken by the rattle of lawn mowers, edgers, fertilizer spreaders and other lawn grooming devices, says Candy McQuiston, Customer Service Manager and chair of the Murphy Green Team.

“Those sounds are part and parcel of our desire to increase the appeal of our homes,” she said. “We all take appropriate pride in the look of our homes and landscapes, but few of us are aware of the potential for pollution that our weekly lawn trimming can cause.”

Grass clippings, fertilizers and other chemicals used in lawn maintenance, if not managed properly, can introduce harmful pollutants into our storm water drains, which empty into local streams that eventually spill into the reservoirs that the community uses for drinking and cooking.

“Keeping our local streams clean is important,” she said. “When pollution enters Maxwell Creek, for example, it has the potential to carry that pollution to Lake Lavan, and that can have a negative effect on all of us.”

Maxwell Creek dissects the City of Murphy and, during rain events, can swell to nearly the height of the walking bridges that cross it. Occasionally, flash flooding will make the normally low waterway dangerous. The water flow eventually makes it way to area lakes, carrying with it silt and other materials.

“When homeowners and lawn treatment companies fertilize lawns, some of the fertilizer falls on driveways, sidewalks, streets and other impervious surfaces,” said McQuiston. “That excess fertilizer should be immediately swept onto the lawn or picked up. Leaving it where it is opens the possibility that rain or sprinklers will wash it into storm water drains. Those nitrates in the fertilizer can harm fish, turtles, animals that drink from creeks and, very possibly, all of us.”

The same is true of grass clippings. Instead of using a blower to push the clippings onto the street, mowers should use the blower to return the clippings onto the freshly-mowed lawn. The clippings act as a natural fertilizer and cover for exposed grass roots.

“Keeping our waterways clean takes more than just picking up tires or other trash along the creek beds,” she said. “Of course, those are important things to do, but being careful with fertilizer, chemicals and clippings should also be a priority.”

The Keep Murphy Beautiful organization along with members of the Green Team will have a presence at the Rainbow Trout Roundup on the morning of Feb. 20 at the City Hall pond. Members will be available to exchange information and answer questions regarding the various clean-up campaigns to be held in 2016, with a special emphasis on storm water management and waterway clean-up.

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ABOUT MURPHY -- Murphy is a fast-growing community located in Collin County. The population is approximately 18,020, generally characterized as highly educated with a median household income above the state average. With more than 70 percent of the land developed, the community is dominated by single-family residences. City planners strive to preserve a country feel while exhibiting an aggressive economic development stance. The centrally-located municipal complex includes four buildings that house Fire, Police, City Administration and Public Works. Money Magazine has dubbed Murphy as the 27th Best Place to Live in America for small cities, and D Magazine placed Murphy as the fifth best suburb in the 2014 list, where it has consistently ranked in the top 10.