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Does your dog have the personality to be cover photo calendar material? Let the public decide.

The North Central Texas Regional Stormwater Management Program is hosting a 2017 Doo the Right Thing Calendar Photo Contest. All you have to do is take the pledge to “doo the right thing” then submit a picture of your dog. The deadline is 11:59 p.m. on June 30.

The Doo the Right Thing pledge means that you commit to pick up your dog’s waste when you are walking, regularly pick up droppings in your yard, and properly dispose of the waste.

To be eligible for the full-page image for the month, photos must be at least 3000x2000 pixels and in landscape orientation. Photos of lesser quality or in portrait orientation may be considered as supplemental images for the calendar. You must be a resident of the 16-county North Central Texas Council of Governments region, which includes Tarrant and Johnson Counties, and Burleson, to participate.

Qualified submissions will be posted to the contest webpage by the end of July, then, in August, the public gets two weeks to cast a vote for the picture they think should be the cover photo. You can only vote once. Take the pledge, read the official rules, and submit your favorite photo of your dog at <http://bit.ly/Dootherightthingphotocontest>.

The photo contest is the fun side of a problem that does pose a health risk. Why should you “doo the right thing?”

- The bacteria and parasites in dog waste present a health risk to pets and people. Pets, kids playing outside, and adults who garden are most at risk for infection.
- Dog waste is messy and unsightly.
- Dog waste affects our water quality. When dog waste is left on the ground, rain or sprinkler runoff can wash it into storm drains. The water entering storm drains isn’t treated, so the waste—along with its bacteria and harmful nutrients—then goes directly into our creeks, rivers, and lakes.

- When the waste decays in water, it releases nutrients that cause algae growth, harming fish and other aquatic life.
- An estimated 1.5 million dogs live in the North Central Texas region, producing more than 500 tons of waste daily. While one pile of poop may not seem like a big deal, many piles add up to a substantial problem. It's up to the entire region to be part of the solution—and your personal commitment makes a huge difference.

How do you become the neighborhood's favorite pet walker, and favorite conscientious neighbor?

- Always carry a couple of bags to pick up after your dog on walks. Plastic bread bags, plastic newspaper sleeves, plastic produce bags, and sealed sandwich or quart bags work great.
- At least once a week, clean up droppings around your yard.
- Toss bagged waste in the trash. If it's not bagged, you can flush it down the toilet. Don't leave those bags of waste on the side of the street, sidewalk, or someone else's yard. Be a good neighbor!

Visit www.dfwstormwater.com/petwaste to find out more about the 2017 photo contest, see the winners from the 2016 photo contest, and check out the locations of off-leash dog parks in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.