



Things You Can Do to Protect Freshwater - Now and For Future Generations

- 1. Reduce your use of phosphorus** by making sure that your dishwasher detergent and any other household cleaners contain no phosphorus.
- 2. Create an environmentally friendly lawn and garden.** Do not use lawn fertilizers that contain phosphorus. In other provinces, Quebec and Ontario, as well as many other municipalities across Canada, the cosmetic use of pesticides which include herbicides has been banned because of the recognition that they contain chemicals hazardous to our health. The fertilizer component of those lawn treatments also can be hazardous for lakes. The reason is that the phosphorus which is not taken up by the grass will be washed off the land into the water system which ultimately drains into the lake. Learn the benefits of xeriscaping(gardening without additional watering) and indigenous plantings.
- 3. Restore your shoreline to a more natural state.** This would include a buffer strip of natural vegetation on your property, aquatic plants in the water and rocks on the lake bed. These actions will improve water quality and reduce erosion because the plants act as a filter for nutrients and other contaminants running off the land.
- 4. Ensure that your septic system is in good shape, with no leaks.** Poorly maintained septic systems can contaminate groundwater that can travel underground and contaminate wells and ultimately surface waters like the lake.
- 5. Do not flush anything down the toilet that shouldn't traditionally go down the toilet.** Waste water treatment systems are designed to treat human waste, not medications and chemicals. Once treated the effluent from waste lagoons and water treatment systems ends up being released into rivers and ultimately ends up in the lake.

6. Stop wasting water. Practice efficient water use. Install dual flush toilets and low flow showerheads. Decreased water going into our water treatment systems will decrease the wear and tear on those systems. As well there are serious predictions of water shortages over the next few decades as a result of climate change and we would all benefit from being more careful with our water use.

7. Preserve or reconstruct wetlands. Wetlands are like nature's kidneys in that they provide tremendous filtration of some of the excess nutrients and pollutants that are fouling our waterways. Support initiatives to compensate farmers for preserving wetlands. If you live on land that contains some wetlands, make an effort to preserve them. If you live on land that has previously been drained, consider having some wetland areas reconstructed.

8. Support the concept of Low Impact Development in municipal development. Ensure that your municipality adopts Low Impact Development principles which stop stormwater by replacing parking lots and roads with some porous surfaces to allow water to seep into the ground.

9. Spread the word! Tell your family and friends about these ideas to encourage more people to become responsible stewards of our precious water and lakes.

10. Let your elected officials from municipal to provincial to federal know that you care about the state of lakes and rivers and that you expect them to demonstrate political will to take action where it is required.

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