



Take Lake-Friendly Actions on Your Property



A rain garden on the landscape can help minimize the amount of polluted runoff water that flows across the landscape and into a waterbody.

Photo courtesy of the Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance Youth Conservation Corps.

No matter where you live, you live in a watershed. A watershed is simply defined as the drainage area to a specific waterbody. Whether you live next to a stream, river, or lake, or live miles away from the nearest waterbody, what you do within the watershed on your property could potentially pollute and harm the quality of lakes, ponds, rivers and streams. Fortunately, there are several simple things you can do to reduce your negative impact on surface water quality in your watershed by managing your property wisely.

Keep native deep-rooted trees, shrubs, and groundcover.

- These are already suited for the environment and require less water and fertilizer than manicured lawns. They also stabilize erosion-prone soils and clean-up polluted water running across the landscape before it reaches surface waters.

Reduce the size of grassy areas and replace with native plantings.

- A mixture of trees, shrubs, and groundcover will add depth and diversity to your property, and habitat for wildlife.
- The University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension Family, Home and Garden Center can help you with selecting native plantings for your property. For assistance, contact (877) EXT-GROW or visit <http://extension.unh.edu/FHGEC/FHGEC.htm>.

Don't fertilize your lawn or use herbicides or pesticides. If you feel you must use fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides, use sparingly and according to state regulations within 250 feet of lakes and rivers.

- No fertilizer, except limestone, can be used within 25 feet of the highwater mark of lakes, ponds and major rivers. Beyond 25 feet, low phosphorus, slow release nitrogen fertilizer may be used.
- Within 25 feet of the highwater mark of lakes, ponds, and major rivers, pesticide and herbicide applications must be conducted by a licensed applicator.

Reduce the amount of water running off your property.

- Collect rain water from your roof in a rain barrel and use it to water your garden.
- Create a rain garden and divert roof and surface water runoff into it. A rain garden is a depression in the ground vegetated with water-loving plant species.
- Replace grassy areas with a diverse mixture of native plantings.
- If you must have a grassy lawn, minimize the size of the area and leave or create a vegetative buffer (trees, shrubs, and ground cover) along streambanks and shorelines. Leave grass at least two to three inches high. The taller the grass, the deeper its roots and the greater its ability to absorb more water and nutrients, reducing the amount of water running off the landscape and into lakes and rivers.
- Re-vegetate bare areas to help hold soil in place.
- Place crushed stone at the outfall of gutters to help prevent erosion and allow for water to soak into the ground.
- Install porous (pervious) pavers or pavement on your driveway which allow water to soak into the ground. This will reduce the amount of water running off the landscape.

Improve the quality of the water running off your property.

- Correct erosion problems by planting deep-rooted vegetation and groundcover.
- Divert the flow of water from driveways and roofs to rain gardens and other vegetated areas. Never divert water into streams, rivers, or lakes.
- Do not use fertilizer, herbicides, or pesticides.
- During the winter, use deicing agents and sand on your driveway and walkways sparingly. Sweep up residues between storms and at the end of winter.

NH LAKES is the only statewide, member-supported nonprofit organization working to keep New Hampshire's lakes clean and healthy, now and in the future. The organization works with partners, promotes clean water policies and responsible use, and inspires the public to care for our lakes. For information, visit www.nhlakes.org, email info@nhlakes.org, or call 603.226.0299.

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