



## Take Lake-Friendly Actions Along the Shoreline



**Do you own or manage a property along a lake or pond?** If yes, check out these lake-friendly living tips which will help you keep the water clean and healthy while enhancing the look and value of your shoreline property!

### **Do not bathe yourself or your pets in the water.**

- Soaps and shampoos will add unwanted nutrients and other pollutants to the lake. Even camping soaps or biodegradable soaps may contain undesirable pollutants.
- Bathing in the lake can introduce bacteria scums and particulates.

### **Avoid attracting waterfowl.**

- Don't feed the waterfowl.
  - Feeding waterfowl will attract more to the site. A single goose can create up to four pounds of waste per day. Waterfowl waste can contain significant amounts of phosphorus (the nutrient which fuels plant and algal growth).
  - Fecal matter can contain harmful parasites and bacteria that can contaminate swimming areas, causing what is commonly called "swimmers itch" for some people.
  - Waterfowl are healthier when they consume the foods they naturally forage.
- Make shoreline property unattractive to waterfowl.
  - Grassy lawns attract geese and ducks. Providing barriers, such as dense shrubs, between the shoreline and the property will discourage waterfowl from the visiting the lawn.

### **Do not remove aquatic plants without a permit.**

- Aquatic plants help prevent erosion by stabilizing lake bottoms and shorelines with their roots and by absorbing wave energy.
- Aquatic plants are also important for fish spawning and nursery areas, and provide habitat for the insects and other organisms that support the entire food chain of the lake.
- Not only is it illegal to remove aquatic plants without a permit, removing native plants may open up habitat for invasive exotic plants to take over.
- Before any invasive plant, such as variable milfoil, can be managed, the waterbody must have a DES-approved long-term management plan. For information, contact DES at (603) 271-2248 or visit [des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/exoticspecies/index.htm](https://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/exoticspecies/index.htm).

### **Avoid dumping sand or creating new beaches.**

- Sandy beaches that are not naturally occurring will not last. The sand will either be carried away by water currents or will slowly settle into the bottom of the lake, where it will contribute to the rate of lake filling-in and aging.
- The addition of sand along the shoreline will smother bottom-dwelling organisms, alter the food chain, destroy fish spawning and nesting sites, and damage fish gills. As the lake becomes shallower, more sunlight will reach the lake bottom, which can lead to increased plant growth.
- It is illegal to dump sand or create a beach in New Hampshire without a permit from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES). For permit information, visit [des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/index.htm](https://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/index.htm) or contact DES at (603) 271-2147.

### **Leave the shoreline and nearshore area in its natural state.**

- Do not remove trees and other vegetation within 250-feet of the shoreline unless you have received a Shoreland Permit which instructs you how to do so. Trees and shrubs help to stabilize the soil and reduce the amount of polluted water that flows into lakes and other surface waters. For permit information, visit [des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/cspa/index.htm](https://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/cspa/index.htm) or contact DES at (603) 271-2147.
- Do not remove rocks and native aquatic plants. Rocks and aquatic plants help break waves and prevent erosion and are important to maintaining the ecological health of waterbodies.

**Restore altered shorelines.** Much of the shoreline along New Hampshire's lakes has already been altered and degraded by the removal of natural vegetation for the construction of docks, houses, lawns, and roads. While shoreline property owners are not required to restore altered shorelines, it is encouraged! It is also relatively easy and is good for the lake and may even increase the attractiveness and value of the property.

- Convert a human-made sandy beach to a completely vegetated area.
- If you must have a sandy human-made beach, make it smaller, or construct a perched beach. A perched beach is one with little or no slope that is set back from the water. Perching a beach will help correct erosion problems on a sloping, sandy beach that leads directly to the water. Contact DES for permit requirements at (603) 271-2147.
- Limit foot traffic to and from the shoreline by providing only one meandering pathway surrounded by vegetation.
- Prevent polluted water from flowing off your property and into the lake by redesigning walkways and paths, and by adding rain gardens and vegetated buffers.

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](http://www.nhlakes.org), email [info@nhlakes.org](mailto:info@nhlakes.org), or call 603.226.0299.

*We hope that you will share this article with others—we just ask that you include the following: This article was originally published by NH LAKES. Thank you!*