

Top 10 Shoreland Best Management Practices

- 1) **Preserve or create a natural shoreline.** Preserving or installing a shoreline landscape that is rich in native species allows water to soak in, rather than run off. Plants absorb nutrients that would otherwise flow into the lake, causing algae blooms and excessive aquatic vegetation growth. Vegetative buffers along shorelines also trap sediments that fill in wetlands and lakes. Natural shorelines are also more consistent with a beautiful “up-north” look.
- 2) **Relax. Reduce your lawn. Keep your trees.** The fertilizers and clippings from traditional suburbanized lawns contribute to poor lake water quality. Once established, natural landscapes are less expensive and easier to maintain than traditional lawns. Keep native trees and vegetation, with their extensive root systems, helping stabilize the landscape, aiding in groundwater recharge and reducing runoff. If lawn is desired, use only phosphorus-free fertilizers and a lawn that is at least 30 feet from the lake.
- 3) **Learn what you can or cannot do on or to the lake and lakeshore.** Shoreline areas provide important habitat for naïve waterfowl, shorebirds, and fish and are crucial for maintaining healthy populations. It is unlawful in Minnesota to knowingly alter shoreline, fish habitat or aquatic vegetation without a permit from the DNR. Upland permits are often required by the County or City – check local ordinances. It is also important to make yourself informed about all the rules that govern lake use.
- 4) **Minimize rooftops and driveways.** Roofs, sidewalks, paved driveways, and roads all increase the amount of water that runs off into our lakes – carrying fertilizers, household cleaners, paints, solvents, pesticides, and motor oil. Decrease the amount of hard surfaces on your property to allow water to soak into the landscape and keep pollutants out of lakes. Consider installing a rain garden or use more pervious materials or pavers for sidewalks, driveways, and patios.
- 5) **Maintain you septic system.** A well-maintained septic saves money, headaches and the environment. To keep your septic in good working order: 1) pump at least every three years (more if you use a garbage disposal); 2) conserve water; 3) properly dispose of harmful paints and household chemicals; 4) fix leaky faucets; and 5) consider service agreements with regular maintenance.
- 6) **Keep native aquatic plants.** Native aquatic plants are critical life support systems for our lakes. With their amazing filtering abilities, native aquatic plants such as cattails and bulrush are natural water purifiers, taking up nutrients and allowing sunlight to penetrate into the lake and create the base of the food chain. The rooted aquatic vegetation is also a veritable fish nursery, which provides critical refuge habitat for young fish.
- 7) **Manage your pet and livestock waste.** Controlling pet and livestock waste not only makes you a courteous neighbor, it also improves the quality of our waters. Dispose of such wastes far from the water’s edge to help ensure that bacteria, phosphorus and nitrogen from these wastes don’t end up in our lakes.

- 8) **Be considerate of other lake users.** Consider some of the many different ways we use our lakes: jet skiing, boating, tubing, water-skiing, fishing, hunting, canoeing, wildlife watching and swimming. Follow local watercraft rules and noise ordinances to help ensure a positive experience for everyone who uses Minnesota's lakes for recreation.
- 9) **Encourage and support land conservation.** The donation or purchase of conservation easements is one of the most cost-effective ways to protect sensitive shorelines from development. Lakeshore owners and users can help in these efforts by maintaining records of changes to shoreline; keeping a watchful eye out for upcoming land sales or transfers; and encouraging donations (land or financial) to conservation easement programs, projects, committees or land trusts.
- 10) **Show up. Speak up.** Decisions are made by those who show up and speak up. Join your lake association or COLA. Give money, time, input, serve, or write a check to support local efforts.

Source: North Central Lakes Project