

THE LAKESMART LAKER'S DOZEN

Lakes are fragile. Care for them today. Enjoy them tomorrow.



1. Support Lake Associations.

Join the board. Attend an annual meeting. Get involved. Visit lakes.me/map to see a map of Maine Lakes association members.

2. Stop The Spread of Invasives.

Clean plant fragments off your boat, trailer and equipment before moving your boat.

Drain bilges away from the lake when you leave a waterbody.

Dry your boat or let it sit several days between uses on different water bodies.

Never transfer water or fish from lake to lake.

3. Follow Shoreland Zoning Rules.

What happens on land doesn't stay on land. Actions you take on your property can have devastating consequences for the health of your lake. Before any project, check with your town office or Code Enforcement Officer to see if you need a permit for work within the shoreland zone, the 250 feet deep strip of land along the edge of a lake.

4. End Erosion.

Check around your buildings, paths, driveways and roads on a rainy day to find places where soil is eroding or washing away. Erosion brings phosphorus into the lake, feeding algae and causing lakes to turn green and "bloom." Fix erosion by planting vegetation downslope; placing crushed stone or erosion control mulch; or constructing swales or rain gardens. For more information on these and other stormwater Best Management Practices, visit lakes.me/BMPs.

5. Build Better Buffers.

Trees, shrubs and grasses protect water quality by slowing rainwater and filtering out soil and other pollutants before they wash into the lake. Deeper buffers are better, as are those with more layers of vegetation. Native plants do more for pollinators, birds and other wildlife. Visit lakes.me/protect for resources on buffer plantings.

6. Ditch Fertilizers, Herbicides and Pesticides.

Long-lasting chemicals in these products can harm children, pets, and aquatic life. They can also feed algae in your lake and turn it green and smelly.

7. Take a Break. Stash Your Rake. Save the Lake!

Limit lawn size, mow less often, leave clippings, and you won't need fertilizer. Don't rake within 75' of shore. Not only is it the law, it is a practice that helps promote native pollinators, and shelters and feeds wildlife.

8. Don't Stress Your Septic.

Check your system and pump the tank regularly as advised by your service provider. Use phosphorus-free cleaners and detergents. Stagger laundry loads and dishwasher runs with no more than one a day. Avoid using the disposal, and minimize water use when possible. Don't put toxics or grease down the drain. Visit lakes.me/septic FMI.

9. Build Lake-Friendly Docks.

Cedar, cypress, plastic or aluminum are good dock materials; as is new, pressure-treated lumber.

10. Don't Treat Your Lake Like a Washtub.

Dogs, humans or boats should *never* be washed in the lake! Soap is not good for water quality. It feeds algae and isn't good for fish or other wildlife.

11. Observe Headway Speed Close to Shore.

Maine law prohibits wakes from boats within 200' of shore. Wakes in shallow water disturb aquatic habitat, stir up sediment, destabilizes shoreline, and damage or destroy loon nests.

12. Give Wildlife a Chance.

Lake shallows and land near the water provide food and shelter for more than 60 native wildlife species and serve as nurseries for their young. Don't "Tidy them up!"

13. Learn About LakeSmart.

LakeSmart provides site-specific suggestions to homeowners that protect water quality and property values, and prevent lake degradation. To learn more, visit lakesmart.org, or contact Maine Lakes at lakesmart@lakes.me.

Since 1970, Maine Lakes has worked across the state to protect and preserve the values and benefits of Maine's lakes, ponds and watersheds for future generations. With our more than 100 partner lake associations and our flagship LakeSmart program, we form a nucleus of lake conservation activity that strengthens the capacity of lake ecosystems to resist destabilizing threats and helps build the effectiveness of local lake organizations and allies. FMI and to join us today, please visit www.lakes.me.