Lake Stewardship: List of 15 Items to Improve your Lake Water Quality

Once humans inhabit a lake environment it will be impacted by people living on the lake.

Therefore, shoreline owners must ensure good stewardship practices to minimize negative effects on their lake.

Items that shoreline owners can do to have a positive impact on their lake community are divided into strong and medium interventions.

STRONG INTERVENTIONS:

1. Create a shoreline buffer to reduce run-off in to your lake. Capturing water run-off with a rain garden is also a great option. See attachment (A) titled “Healthy Shorelines” (DNR).
2. Septic system checked and emptied at least every 3 years (unless you have a holding tank) to ensure it is compliant and working properly. See attachment (B) titled “Healthy Septic Systems” (MN PCA).
3. Manage Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) in your lake like Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP), Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM), and common carp.
4. Promote bow fishers to harvest Carp (non-native, exotic fish) to help manage Carp population.
5. Rake leaves and grass clipping from getting into your lake.
6. Donate to your lake association (above annual membership fee) to work jointly with lake community to improve water quality with various projects (AIS).

MEDIUM INTERVENTIONS:

1. Be aware of fertilizers/chemicals used on lawn or weeds. Only use fertilizer with zero as middle number, which indicates zero phosphate (e.g. fertilizer with 12-0-12). Minnesota soil has adequate phosphate levels, and each pound of phosphate introduced into your lake will cause up to 500 pounds of weed/algae growth.
2. Clean debris/trash from ice after ice fishing season and removal of ice fish houses has occurred. Clean-up depends on recent snowfall and ice conditions.
3. Become member of lake association and regularly attend meetings to obtain information about lake and improvement projects. Includes annual membership dues.
4. Inspect boat, trailers, docks, and other lake equipment for AIS. Through inspection required if moving between other lakes or rivers. Likewise, AIS inspections at boat launch is helpful to minimize the spread of AIS. See attachment (C) titled “Protect Our Lakes”.
5. Follow Sherburne County Zoning regulations for alterations to shoreline and AWL setbacks.
6. Collect pet waste, so will not run-off into lake.
7. Remove ash from fire pits, if located near lake, so ash will not blow or run off into lake. See attachment (D) from Minnesota Sea Grant.
8. Remove and prevent debris and trash from lake.
9. Remove aquatic plants/weeds cut by boats from your shoreline.