



Lake Protection Workbook

A Self-Assessment Tool for Shoreline Property Owners



LAKE LINKS

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Watersheds
CANADA

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Disclaimer

This workbook is not a replacement for technical evaluation or in-person assessment by a professional.

It is an educational tool drawing attention to important aspects of lake protection.

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Introduction

There are compelling reasons why people are drawn to lakeside cottages, homes, camp sites and retreats. Among these are the solitude, the peace and quiet, the beauty of the water and surrounding forests, and the enjoyment that comes from spending time with family and friends. Our lakes are also a source of income for some, a source of significant tourism revenue for local communities, and provide clean drinking water for surrounding villages, towns and cities.

Our lake environments support countless species of plants and animals, with the 'ribbon of life' (near-shore habitat) especially critical to their survival and well-being. Lakes are complex ecosystems, of which humans are a part, and no two are exactly alike. Each depends upon good stewardship (i.e. responsible care and use) to remain healthy. Your individual property is important to the overall health of your lake. As with all conservation measures – whether reusing or learning to turn off the lights when leaving a room – you can make a difference. If every property owner on every lake was to take ownership of the health of that lake, imagine how we could, collectively, improve the quality of life for all.

This Lake Protection Workbook is a tool designed for you to self-assess whether activities and uses on your property are protecting your lake. Practical information, recommendations and space for recording improvements are offered to assist you in your lake protection efforts. Your completed workbook is for you to keep and is completely confidential.

Lake protection is everyone's responsibility, and every action matters. Being a patient, persistent and active steward of our lakes is essential to their good health – and ours as well. We hope that you'll share this workbook with others on your lake.



Photo: Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority

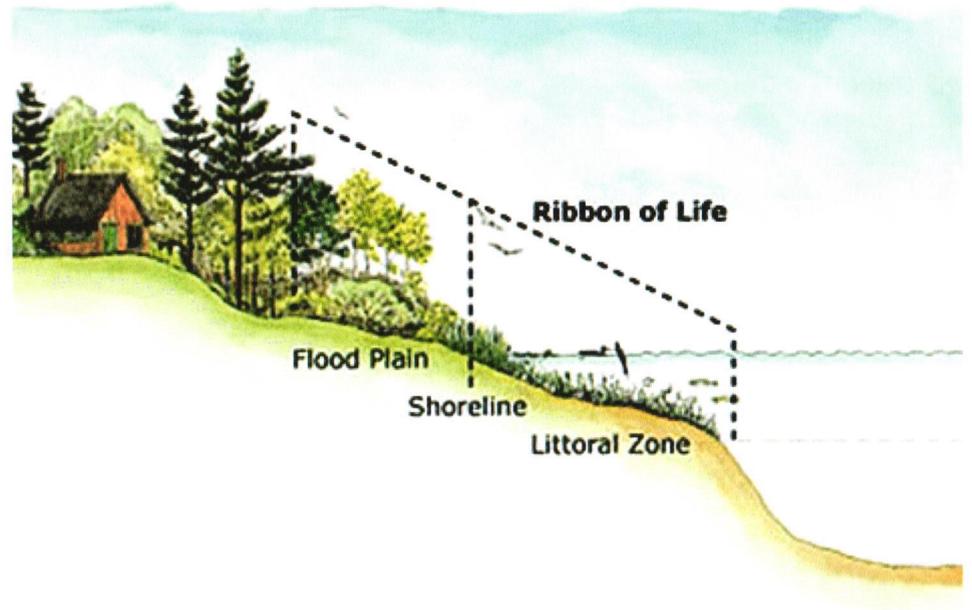


Illustration: Rideau Valley Conservation Authority

How to Complete This Work

The following pages provide a series of questions that help you to assess how well you are protecting your property and your lakefront through everyday actions. The questions relate to such factors as lawns and gardens, the shoreline, your sewage system, and other considerations. Once these questions are answered, you will be able to calculate your scores and learn about ways in which you might be able to improve your lakeshore practices – thus helping to protect your lake.

Part 1 is intended to capture general property information, such as shoreline frontage, number of buildings on the property, etc. so that you have a record of your property at the time your workbook was completed.

Part 2 challenges you to think about various aspects of lake protection, and how you are doing in relation to these on your own property. There are nine topic areas in the workbook requiring observations and careful reflection. Depending on your property, reading and filling in your workbook could take a few hours – take your time for maximum benefit.

Follow these steps for Part 2:

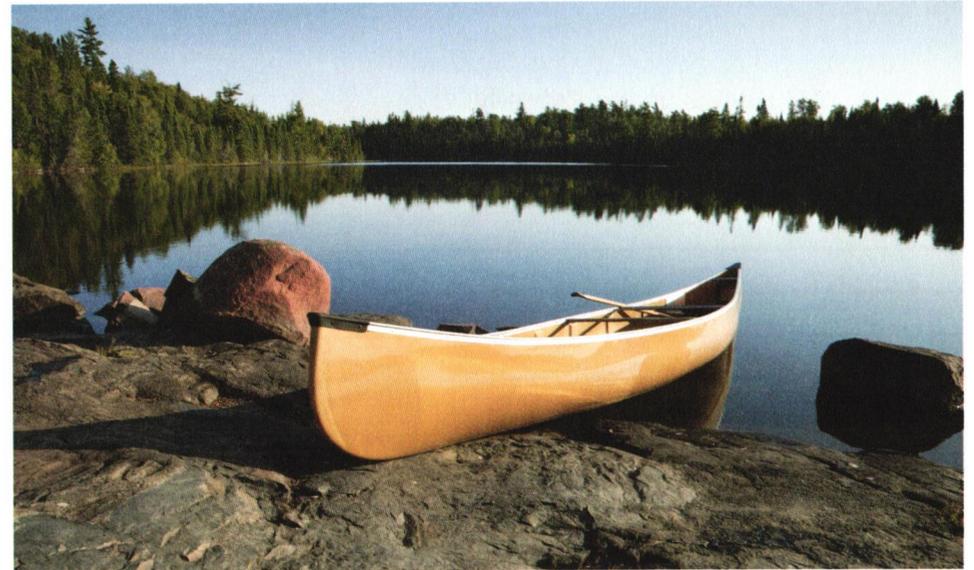
- Complete each section of multiple-choice questions;
- Record scores and calculate the total score for each section;
- Complete the summary score sheet on pages 32 and 33 to compare your scoring for each section: a higher score indicates a property with better lake protection;
- Determine how much your property and related activities contribute to lake health; and,
- Make note of recommended actions to improve shoreline protection on your property.

Part 3 is space for recording planned improvements and achievements for your shoreline property.

Part 4 is a summary of contacts and resources.

Keep this workbook with your property records. It is recommended that you review the information in this workbook every year. Keeping an up-to-date record will help to keep property-specific lake protection a priority.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact your local Conservation Authority or watershed organization.



Part 2: Lake Protection Self-Assessment

Lawns & Gardens

Maintaining a lawn on a waterfront property can be challenging. In addition, lawns have low habitat value and short root systems that don't strongly bind to the soil; this can lead to shoreline erosion. Studies also show that 55% of precipitation runs off hardened surfaces, including short waterfront lawns.

When waterfront lawns are treated with herbicides and chemical fertilizers, the chemicals will run directly into the nearby lake or stream and adversely affect the aquatic ecosystem.

A healthy alternative to herbicides and fertilizers is to use natural methods of lawn care, as outlined below. Also, naturalizing sections of lawn, especially along the shoreline, will not only lessen the amount of effort required for maintenance, but will reduce erosion and provide important nearshore habitat.

- **Naturalize your lakeside property** by replacing short cut grass with native grasses, wildflowers and other native plants;
- **Move your lawn further back** from the shoreline;
- **Increase shrub borders or expand field and forest habitat;** and
- **Leave any sections of lawn approximately 10 centimetres high** to encourage the growth of stronger and deeper roots

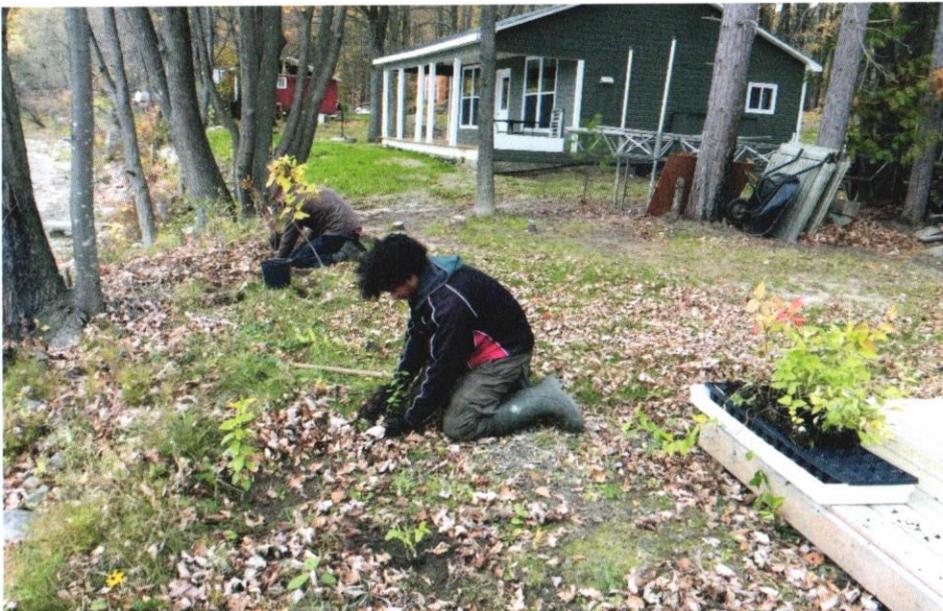


Photo: Shoreline Planting, Watersheds Canada, 2018



Photo: Lemoine Point Native Plant Nursery, Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority

Recreation

Boating, fishing and celebrations with friends and family are a key part of the lake experience.

Your lake is precious to you and boating is a great way to enjoy and explore your lake. Keep in mind that there are others boating, as well as wildlife on the lake. Being a respectful, courteous and safe boater is appreciated by wildlife and fellow boaters alike.

Fishing is a popular pastime enjoyed by lakefront property owners and lake visitors. To ensure the sustainability of fish populations, follow all provincial regulations for your fisheries management zone. This includes respecting size limits, catch limits and seasons set out for different fish species. Fishing zone maps and rules can be found online and in the Fishing Ontario Recreational Fishing Regulations Summary.

In addition, take precautions to prevent the transportation of invasive species. Always clean, drain and dry your boat before launching at another lake. Be careful with your bait choices and don't release unused bait into any waterbody. It is illegal to release any live bait or dump the contents of your bait bucket directly into or within 30 metres of any waters! Another best practice is to try to use tackle that is lead-free, as it protects against wildlife poisoning.



Photo: Eaton & Putnam Count

Photo: Ontario Federation of Cottagers Associations, 2019



Although fireworks create a spectacular visual show, enjoyable to many as the colourful explosions reflect on the lake surface, there are risks to this activity.

Fires and injuries are possible. The particulate left in the sky after a firework explodes contains heavy metals, including lead, which can land directly on the lake or be washed into the lake following a rain storm, with harmful effects on the aquatic food chain. Noise and light from fireworks can have a negative impact on wildlife including nest desertion.