Stockbridge Bowl Stewardship Commission

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Commission is to conserve and protect Lake Mahkeenac and its watershed, to enhance the water quality, fishery, wildlife habitat and aesthetics of Lake Mahkeenac as a public recreational facility for today and for future generations while respecting the interests of property owners and the public, providing permanent stewardship to the lake ecosystem.

Stockbridge Bowl monitoring
Summer 2019

What *you* can do:

- **Curb Pollutants**

Curb pollutants at their source – fertilizers, household toxins, eroding soils, malfunctioning septic systems.

- **Prevent runoff**

Cut the amount of runoff that picks up pollutants and carries them to the waterway by minimizing the hard surfaces that create runoff.

- **Capture & Cleanse**

Capture and cleanse pollutant-carrying runoff before it reaches the waterway – with shore land buffers, rain barrels or rain gardens.

For more information please go to http://berkshireplanning.org/images/uploads/documents/Buffer_Manual.pdf

Prepared by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission For The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

Protecting our environment & your investment

7 Simple Lakefront Stewardship Practices

A watershed is the land area that drains to a lake or stream. Waterfront property owners, inland residents, recreational users, agricultural producers and other businesses all can play a positive role in maintaining and improving the water quality of our lakes and streams.

When you are fertilizing your lawn, remember, you are not JUST fertilizing the lawn.

Simple Step #1— Choose zero Phosphorous fertilizer

If you MUST fertilize, avoid fertilizers that contain phosphorus. Remember, it's phosphorus that accelerates algae growth in our lakes and rivers. Most lawns and gardens already contain adequate – and often excessive – amounts of phosphorus. Consider this – one pound of phosphorus in runoff can result in 500 pounds of algae growth!

If you follow the instructions on a bag of fertilizer containing phosphorus, you may be adding over 50 pounds of phosphorus to a half-acre lot each year.

Phosphorus is an essential nutrient for plants. However, when too much phosphorus makes its way into our lakes and streams it promotes the rapid growth of weeds and algae and decreases water clarity, often turning lakes green. Decaying algae also depletes oxygen in the water, so that fish can no longer thrive. Human activities contribute a great deal to the amount of phosphorus that enters a lake or stream.

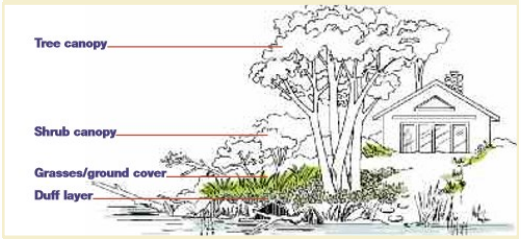
If you wouldn't drink it, don't dump it—better yet, minimize the use of toxic products

Simple Step #2— Properly dispose of household hazardous wastes

Do not pour old oil or pesticides into the lawn or wash paint brushes at the end of your driveway. Where do these pollutants end up? In our groundwater, lakes and streams! Gasoline, oil, solvents, old paints, thinners, fertilizers, pesticides, cleaners and many other products need to be disposed of properly.

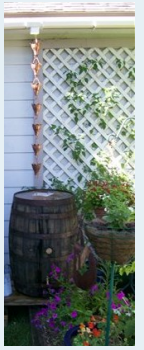
Simple Step #3— Minimize erosion

Minimize hard surfaces through the use of gravel, stepping stones or porous paving and vegetate! Do not transfer problems by diverting runoff to your neighbor's property—you may need to work together to solve runoff problems.



Simple Step #4— Direct downspouts onto your lawn or landscaping, not onto hard surfaces

Simple Step #5— Install a rain barrel



Collect water from your rooftop to water your yard during dry periods. The barrel should be covered to keep out silt, leaves and insects.

Simple Step #6— Inspect & maintain your septic system regularly

Malfunctioning systems are especially harmful. Effluent from failed systems can result in direct contamination of well or surface water and could cause serious human health risks. Reasons for septic system failure may include advanced age, overloading, poor site placement and/or poor maintenance.

Simple Step #7— Protect or restore your shoreland buffer

If you have native vegetation along your shoreline, consider yourself and the local wildlife fortunate.

If you have lawn to the water's edge and would like to play a more active role in restoring your shore land, you can replant native trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers to attract songbirds and butterflies. The main area where water runs off your property is the best location to start planting to improve water quality. You can create a natural, waterfront landscape while eliminating expensive and time-consuming lawn care.