



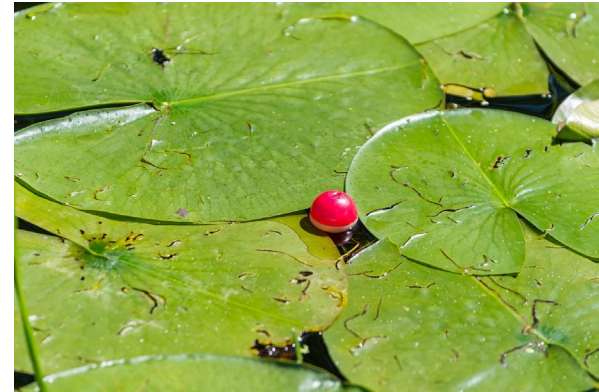
Protecting  
Minnesota's lake  
and river heritage  
since 1994

## Subcommittee on MN Water Policy

Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates

# MLR Mission: To protect MN's lake and river heritage by forging powerful links among lakes, lake advocates and policy makers.

- Formed in 1993
- ≈ 280 Lake Association/COLA Orgs
- ≈ 6000 Individual Members; property owners, some resort and marina owners, and angling guides.



**If we want to  
manage water, we  
must manage  
land.**

**Action Areas:**

- **Civic Partnerships**
- **Professional Advocacy**
- **Programs for Lake Associations**
- **Support Science**
- **Media**
- **Education**

# MN's Lake Heritage - Heirlooms not assets

A 2016 Study found:

- 34 year average ownership,
- Mean age 68 years old,
- 72% purchased their property for recreational/retirement. 20% inherited their property or purchased it from a family member.
- 8% of respondents purchased their property as an investment. 2% sell their property to make a profit.
- 86% have no plans to sell. 30% of those plan to pass or have passed their cabin on to family members.
- 62% of lake home and cabin property owners buy a fishing license each year. Persons who visit the lake property as guests purchase an average of 3.97 licenses per year.

<https://mnlakesandrivers.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Public2016MLRStudyResponses.docx.pdf>



# Lake Associations - profound (untapped) MN resource

According to a 2017 study by Concordia College found that:

- Most Minnesota lake associations were formed in the 1960s and '70s to improve lake water quality.
- Most are open to anyone interested in the welfare of the lake, not just owners of lake properties.
- About half of lake association board members have expertise in specific lake conservation areas,
- **Collectively, the 500+ Minnesota lake associations spend about \$6.25 million annually, to the care of Minnesota's lakes.**
- **Collectively, the 500+ lake associations in Minnesota contribute about 1.2 million volunteer hours annually to lake conservation activities,**
- The top 3 concerns of lake associations in Minnesota are: AIS, overall water quality, and runoff control.
- **Most respondents agree or strongly agree that their associations are not being heard/taken seriously by the DNR,**
- Most respondents do not agree that their lake associations are authentically included in the lake planning process,
- Most respondents do not think that the DNR has sufficient lake management policies in place.

<https://mnlakesanddrivers.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/mn-lake-association-survey-2017-report.pdf>





*“... the division between those with and without expert knowledge will be one of the basic sources of social and political conflict in the next century.... Hard evidence demonstrates that the ordinary citizen is capable of a great deal more participation than generally recognized or acknowledged.”*

Frank Fisher, Citizens, Experts and the Environment.

## MN Lakes & Rivers Aquatic Plants Survey



*Survey response dates: January 5 – 17, 2022  
Report date: February 7, 2022*

## Survey Respondents reported:

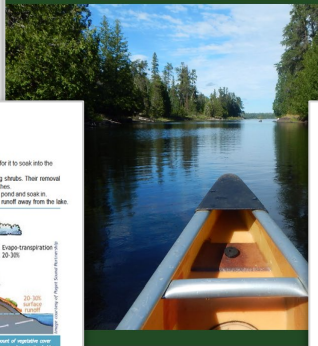
- 74% reported current problems with aquatic plants,
- 77% of those lakes report they are organizing their lake communities to combat the problems,
- While 80+% of lake associations feel that the city, county or state should be responsible for maintaining a healthy plant community in Minnesota lakes, almost 90% report that homeowners and lake associations have had to be responsible for it.
- Only 31% of respondents feel the DNR is proactively working to solve nuisance plant issues.
- While 92% have sought to gain permits for their own treatments, less than 15% of the total feel the DNR has organized itself efficiently to address their concerns.

# Lake Steward Program





# Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates: Shoreland Guide to Lake Stewardship



### Reduce Runoff: It Doesn't Go Away

**Maintain Natural Vegetation**

Natural vegetation will naturally reduce runoff by holding back the water providing time for it to soak into the ground.

- When clearing your lot, minimize the removal of wooded areas, trees, and the growing shrubs. Their removal causes more rain to fall directly on the ground instead of landing on leaves and branches.
- Consider ways to reduce the volume of water that runs off your property.
- Carefully landscape your yard near ditches, droways, and along the shoreline to direct runoff away from the lake.

When there is precipitation, what happens to it? It can be stored in the ground, the amount of moisture that is in the ground will depend on the amount of runoff of infiltration, water in the "soil" plane, the natural retention rate that the ground can absorb for a day or so on the ground.

**Reduce Hard Surfaces, Like Roofs and Driveways**

Since impervious surfaces cannot absorb water, reducing the amount of impervious surfaces on your lot will reduce the volume of runoff.

- When considering additions, decide if the extra space is really necessary. Could you build up existing walls and sidewalks? Local driveway, sidewalk, driveway, and footpaths away from steep slopes.
- If you're installing a new patio or installing a sidewalk or walkway, use bricks, interlocking pavers, or flat stones that are set in a porous material. Consider using permeable pavers when water runs through it, and permeable asphalt for driveways.

**The Wisconsin DNR estimates that installing them on an undeveloped shoreline lot compared to a large, two-story house (approximately a 500 square foot of impervious surfaces) on a lot already converted to lawn. They found up to a:**

- 50% increase in runoff volume.
- 70% increase in phosphorus washing into the lake, and
- 80% increase in sediment flowing to the lake on the large lawn lot.



### Curb Pollution: Inspect and Maintain Your Septic System

*Most homes in shoreland areas rely on Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTs), commonly known as the septic system. Your septic system, if designed, installed, and maintained properly, will effectively treat wastewater before it is returned to the environment, will protect public health and will prevent pollution of a nearby lake or river.*

**Understand How Your Septic System Works**

Understanding your system is essential to proper operation and maintenance. The basic components of most systems are:

- The **Sepic Tank** receives the wastewater from the household plumbing. In the tank, the solids are separated from the liquid. Here, naturally occurring bacteria decomposes food particles and human waste and the remaining solids settle to the bottom until they are pumped out on a regular basis. The tank has an inspection pipe for monitoring the tank and a manhole for access when pumped. When the capacity of the tank is reached the excess liquid flows, or is pumped, into the drain field.
- The **Soil Treatment System** (drain field) is typically a network of perforated pipes surrounded by small rocks and soil. The liquid contains pathogens (disease-causing organisms), nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrate, and fine solids. It is cleaned naturally by bacteria as it percolates down through the soil. The design of the treatment system (drain, mound, etc.) is based on the soil conditions on the property.

**What Causes a Septic System to Fail?**

Septic system failure is most commonly the result of:

- Improper maintenance;
- Overrun of water at the home, and/or
- Incomplete design or installation of the system.

When your system, or a neighbor's system fails, untreated wastewater could come in contact with people, causing a public health hazard, or enter the groundwater and eventually add pollutants to the lake that can contribute to increased algae and plant growth.

**Proper operation and maintenance will extend the life of your system for many years and prevent costly repairs.**

**If you have a problem:**

- Contact your local County Environmental Services for advice and/or check their website for a list of licensed septic inspectors.
- If the drain field or household pipes are not designed into the system, pumped for both solids and liquids as a temporary measure.
- If there is surface pooling of wastewater, freeze off the area to prevent contact with humans or pets.

**All used three feet of unabsorbed soil is needed for the wastewater to be properly treated. The untreated effluent is pumped to your nearby and although it is a drain from the soil in the winter months there are still an estimated 100 million gallons of water and nutrients come from the untreated effluent to the lake.**

**What are the signs of a failing system?**

- Sewage backup into the house or slow toilet flushing.
- Foul odors or soil treatment areas.
- System alarms sounding.
- Wet and/or black areas around a septic mound.
- Algal blooms and excessive plant growth in the water near the tank.
- Sewage odors indoors or outdoors.
- Water or sewage surfacing in the yard or a nearby water body.
- High levels of nitrate or coliform bacteria in well water tests.

**Pump the Tank Regularly**

If you have a licensed professional pump the solids (floating sludge and scum) that have accumulated from the septic tank every one to three years—the more use, the more often pumping is needed. Make sure they pump through the manhole. Carriage disposal use is not recommended with septic systems. Pumping anything if you are using a disposal. Failure to remove the solids can cause them to enter the drain field, which can result in expensive repair or replacement. There is a list of septic system installers, designers, and similar available through the Environmental Services Office.

Answers a variety of shoreline restoration concerns. Including:

- DNR restrictions
- waste disposal
- septic tank management
- retaining wall regulations
- watershed

If a shoreline does not pass an evaluation, the property owner can be offered the "Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates: Shoreland Guide to Lake Stewardship" as well as a list of contacts in their county.

## So far:

- **22 lake associations** are hosting Lake Steward,
- **23 have taken the training** to host a Lake Steward program,
- **81 Lake Stewards** have been awarded so far,
- **144 owners** are working to achieve Lake Steward.

# Join our amazing Lake Stewards in protecting Minnesota's lakes





# Up the Creek Meats - Connects Regenerative Agriculture Producers with Lake Association Markets

Up the Creek Meats connects lake associations with farmers who protect water.

By participating in Up the Creek Meats, lake associations are taking direct action to improve water quality on the lake they love, helping to build a new local food market that protects the water quality, and supporting local farm economies.





# Legislation to Support Lake Associations

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- Expanded Boater Education and Certification:
    - Improved boater safety
    - Significant lake ecology to share best practices for wake and prop-thrust management,
    - Reduce conflicts among user groups
  - Improved Process for Authentic Civic Partnerships.
  - Funding to expand aquatic plant management/lake vegetation management plans,
  - Sustainable Shoreline Incentive Act
  - Comprehensive statewide AIS prevention/management plan among AIS stakeholders (DNR, Counties, Lake Associations)
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**Thank you.**