



Stewardship Initiatives

You can do your part to keep Bass Lake healthy by being a good lake steward. Here are a few tips on what you can do to promote a healthy lake system:

Shoreline Naturalization

Did you know that 90 per cent of all aquatic life either live in or use the water in front of a shoreline? Natural shorelines provide habitat and food for fish, nesting birds, mammals, and insects. Vegetation at the water's edge helps to filter pollutants and nutrients, prevent soil erosion, and reduce impacts of flooding. Overhanging vegetation along with underwater logs and rocks allow fish to rest, feed, and spawn while providing protection from predators.

- ◆ Replant native trees and shrubs along your shoreline and maintain areas of vegetation that already exist
- ◆ Leave a buffer of native vegetation a minimum of 3 metres wide around your entire shoreline
- ◆ Avoid using chemical fertilizers and pesticides
- ◆ If shoreline protection is needed, consider a buffer zone of loose rock and native vegetation for stabilization
- ◆ Install a dock that minimizes disturbances to the shoreline and aquatic habitat
- ◆ Encourage biodiversity by leaving rock piles and fallen tree limbs on your property to function as wildlife habitat
- ◆ Maintain a natural shoreline to discourage Canada Geese which prefer to eat short, manicured lawn grasses with an open view of the water

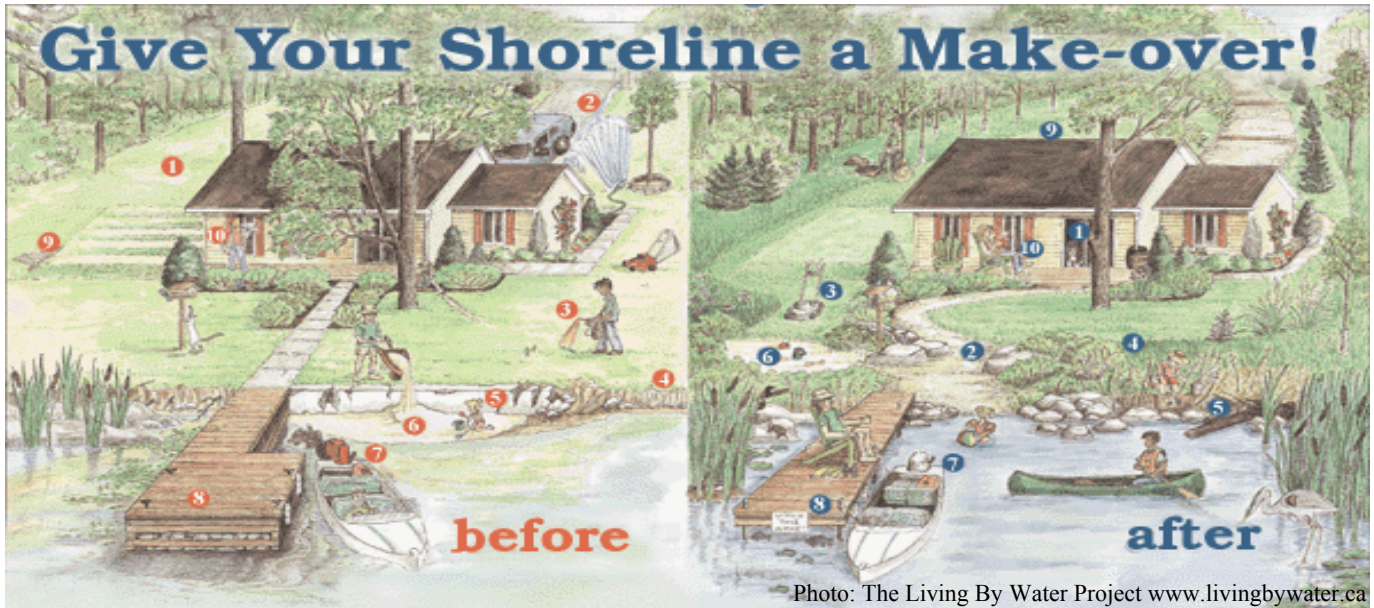


Photo: The Living By Water Project www.livingbywater.ca

Before

1. Cleared, manicured lot - lacks shade and privacy; loss of native plants leads to
2. Runoff - flows over solid surfaces accelerating erosion; pollutants and excess silt degrade habitat for aquatic life.
3. Chemical fertilizers and pesticides - degrade water quality, are hazardous to your health, can be deadly for fish and other wildlife.
4. Lawn to the water's edge - lacks deep roots required to stabilize bank.
5. Hardened shoreline - can deflect erosion downstream, eliminates "natural filtering" of pollutants and sediment, degrades habitat.
6. Artificial beach - requires ongoing sand replacement, reduces water quality, degrades aquatic habitat.
7. Old 2-stroke engine - dumps 25-40% of fuel, un-combusted into water and air.
8. Solid crib dock - destroys aquatic habitat, alters currents, can deflect erosion downstream.
9. Malfunctioning septic system - allows phosphorous and bacteria to leach into adjacent waterways.
10. Harmful household chemicals and cleaners - damage septic system and degrade water quality.

After

1. Prune trees rather than removing them; plant low maintenance native trees and
2. Replace solid surfaces with porous materials where possible; redirect runoff into settling areas, away from the water's edge.
3. "Mow it high and let it lie" - leave grass 8 cm (3") high to retain moisture, mulch clippings for fertilizer.
4. Start a buffer - leave some grass uncut along the water's edge; restore with deep rooting native plants.
5. "Soften" your shoreline - improve erosion protection with native trees, shrubs, grasses and aquatic plants.
6. Create a "dry land" beach above the high water mark; let imported sand erode away naturally and native plants grow back.
7. Use a well maintained electric motor, or a 4 or 2-stroke engine that meets or exceeds EPA 2006 guidelines.
8. Remove solid dock - try a pipe, cantilever or floating dock, avoid treated wood; use public access where possible.
9. Replace and properly maintain your septic system - consult an expert.
10. Use environment - friendly products, or alternatives like baking soda and vinegar.

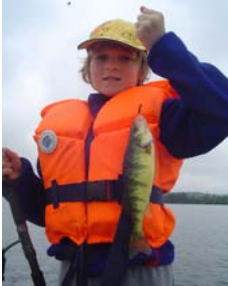


Stewardship Initiatives

Invasive Species

Invasive species are organisms that have been introduced into areas where they haven't historically existed. Invasive species can cause harm to native fish and wildlife, damaging ecosystems and threatening biodiversity. Zebra mussels have already been established in Bass Lake, but the need for vigilance is high in order to prevent other invasives - such as round gobies, rusty crayfish, and invasive zooplankton - from colonizing and harming Bass Lake. Here's how you can help:

- ◆ Clean all plant and animal material from your boat when removing it from a lake
- ◆ Wash your boat and all related equipment with warm, soapy water before transporting your boat to another water body
- ◆ Use only native plant species in your garden
- ◆ Do not dump unused fishing bait in the lake - dispose of it on land or in the trash away from water



Fishing and Recreation

- ◆ If possible, practice catch-and-release fishing, especially when fishing for larger bass
- ◆ Avoid fishing around spawning areas during the spring
- ◆ Use non-lead fishing tackle
- ◆ Replace your old 2-stroke engine with a less-polluting 4-stroke engine
- ◆ Keep your speed under 10 km/h (5 knots) within 30 metres of the shore
- ◆ Avoid boating and using recreational vehicles around wildlife and breeding areas

Docks

- ◆ Consider installing a floating or pipe dock - both present minimal damage to the shoreline and aquatic habitat
- ◆ Avoiding the use of pressure-treated wood can prevent you and aquatic life from being exposed to potentially harmful chemicals

Septic Systems

- ◆ Inspect and maintain your tank, and have it pumped every 2 to 3 years
- ◆ Do not dump toxic waste, fats/oils, or antibacterial products down your drain or toilet
- ◆ Have an effluent filter installed in your septic tank to prevent solids from clogging your system
- ◆ Avoid constructing decks or patios or watering your lawn around the leaching bed; shade and excess water can reduce the bed's ability to absorb and treat wastewater from your house
- ◆ Use phosphate-free or low phosphate detergents and cleaners

Drinking Water / Well Care

- ◆ Ensure your well is a minimum of 100 feet from your - and your neighbours' - septic bed
- ◆ Test your drinking water for bacteria at least 3 times a year - test bottles can be obtained from your local health unit
- ◆ Using less water decreases the amount of water filtering through your septic system and the amount of nutrients or pollutants that seep into the groundwater
- ◆ Clean debris from your well and ensure the lid is vermin proof

Please remember, permission is required before beginning any work that may alter your shoreline

Before making any changes to your shoreline, please contact:

Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority
Ministry of Natural Resources

(705) 424-1479
1-800-667-1940

www.nvca.on.ca
www.mnr.gov.on.ca

Additional Resources

- ◆ The Dock Primer (DFO) www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/regions/central/pub/dock-quals-on/index_e.htm
- ◆ A Shoreline Owner's Guide to Lakeland Living www.otonabee.com/resources_index.htm
- ◆ Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters Invasive Species Hotline 1-800-563-7711



Thanks to our Conservation Champions—our landowners, community groups, schools, businesses and government agencies—that support watershed stewardship activities!



Contact NVCA staff at (705) 424-1479 or at www.nvca.on.ca to get involved!