

Autumn 2008

LN/NL River Conservancy District
of IL

the Watershed

Volume 3 Issue 6
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the Watershed

is a periodic publication that contains information relevant to our District's constituents.

Save Your Lake and Watershed: What You Can Do!

By Steve Larry, LN/NL RCD Vice-President

As a home owner and/or land owner in the Lost Lake watershed area, you should be concerned about the need to reduce pollutants that not only affect this beautiful lake we have been blessed with, but also the surrounding streams and the Rock River.

Your RCD has embarked on an aggressive program designed to improve these ecosystems in coming years. But you

can't sit back and depend solely on the RCD to solve independently all the problems for you. There are many things you can and must do to "save" your lake.

The following article will outline what you can be doing at literally no cost to you that will pay dividends many times over for you and the community. Please take this information to heart.

If EVERYONE does

their part, we will reap the benefits both in the short and long term.

Home and Yard

Credit: IEPA Lakenotes

It may not be surprising to find out that your local lake has been impacted by pollution. However, what may surprise you is that a major source of that pollution often

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From the President—By Marty Portner, LN/NL RCD President

As fall is already here, let me apprise our District members of a few things regarding use of the RCD facilities and of some important regulations that are about to be enacted that affect you.

The RCD now requires that all docks be identified with a perma-

nent identification number. This number will be used by the RCD when making its periodic inspections of docks in order to check for compliance with our standards of good repair and safety. If you have placed a dock in the Lake, the RCD will supply you with appropriate

identifying numbers. We will also guide you as to where and how to affix them to your dock so that they can be clearly seen by our safety volunteers who periodically inventory and inspect the structures. It is your responsibility to complete

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Did You Know...

- You can access our website www.rcdinfo.com for minutes of LNNLRCD meetings?
- You can be on the A-list! To get important RCD information sent directly to your e-mail contact the office at 815 652-2006 or e-mail becky@rcdinfo.com to be added to the list.

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Save Your Lake and Watershed (continued from page 1)

can start literally right in your own back yard! In many areas of Illinois, household pollution contributes significantly to lake degradation. The source of much household pollution is outdoor activities and can be as diverse as yard work, working on the car, salting the steps in winter, or walking the dog. This publication will give you tips to minimize impacts your household may have on the lake near you.

The natural patterns of land are altered when homes are built. What once was covered with vegetation is replaced with roofs, driveways, sidewalks, and streets. Consequently, the amount of water that can soak into the soil is reduced, resulting in more water running off the land and into lakes. As this runoff heads toward a lake, it picks up pollutants such as nutrients from lawn fertilizers, bacteria from pet wastes, litter, sediment particles from exposed soil... the list goes on and on.

In urbanized areas, runoff is often

routed through a system of underground storm sewers that empty directly into a lake or a tributary stream. In this case, even if you live blocks away from the lake, it's essentially like you're living right along the lakeshore. Also, because most storm sewer systems are designed to quickly remove water from developed areas during a storm, this causes pollutants to reach lakes even faster.

What you do around your home can help or harm lake water quality. For example, rain can wash improperly applied fertilizers and pesticides into lakes. On the other hand, carefully planned landscaping and prudent lawn care reduce the need for lawn chemicals and protect water quality.

Similarly, anything that drips from a motor vehicle can wash into storm sewers. Antifreeze, gasoline, and motor oil are toxic to aquatic life. Just five quarts of motor oil can create a slick the size of two football fields.

Clearly, there's a need to rethink

Clearly, there's a need to rethink what we're doing at home if our lakes are to be clean and usable for generations to come.

what we're doing at home if our lakes are to be clean and usable for generations to come. By following the tips found in this publication, we can all help minimize the impact of our home and yard care activities on local lakes, and at the same time enhance our homes and communities.

Simple Tips for Cleaner Lakes

Whether you live in the city or the country... whether your home is large or small... whether you have a lot of time and money to invest in your yard or just a little there is something you can do to help improve the quality of your local lake. The following suggestions are ways that you can make a contribution to clean lakes and a healthy environment.

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From the President (continued from page 1)

this work. Please call the office at 815.652.2006 for more information.

We are getting closer to determining our policy regarding shoreline stabilization. Our lake manager Joe Rush has determined that there are three basic configurations that will satisfy our goal of reducing shoreline erosion and subsequent deleterious nutrient contributions from landscape runoff. They are Riprap, native vegetation, or a combination of both. By Spring we hope to have real

life examples of the kinds of the appropriate time.

shorelines that are acceptable on Lost Lake. The areas of North Beach, East Beach, Lake Court Center, Lake Side Park and possibly the Clear Creek entrance from the Silt Basin will be stabilized. Our policy should be finalized and put into resolution form during the winter. We will begin the mandatory stabilization program in the Spring of 2009. All shoreline property owners will be required to participate. Details will be mailed to each property owner at

Remember that the beaches and campgrounds are closed to the public until the Spring. We regularly patrol these areas to make sure that no one uses the facilities in the off-season for safety reasons.

I am also compelled to remind you that the RCD burn pile is not a public dumping grounds. Anyone caught trying to dump anything but burnable brush (not logs or objects manufactured from wood) will be given a citation and prosecuted. ♦



Around your home...

Use lawn and garden chemicals carefully and sparingly. Utilize manual, mechanical, and biological pest control methods first before chemical pesticides. Many Illinois soils already contain sufficient quantities of phosphorus to support healthy lawns. Contact your County Extension Service agent for information on how to conduct a soil test of your lawn. If no additional phosphorus is needed, purchase only low or no phosphorus fertilizer blends. The middle number on the fertilizer bag indicates the phosphorus content ("10-3-10" means the blend contains 10% nitrogen, 3% phosphorus, and 10% potash). Never apply more phosphorus than your lawn needs your lawn won't grow any better, but the algae and weeds in your lake will!

Choose appropriate types of turf grass and groundcovers for your site's soil, sunlight, and water conditions to minimize maintenance and fertilizer and pesticide use.

Keep your mowing height high. Set your mower blade at 3 inches to provide a "taller" lawn that holds water better, requires less irrigation, and helps shade out weeds. Mow often enough to leave grass clippings on the lawn, and use a mulching mower if possible. Grass clippings actually promote healthy lawns by recycling nitrogen nutrients back to the grass for free! Alternatively, use clippings as a mulch or compost them with leaves.

On waterfront property, grow a "buffer strip" of dense, native vegetation along the shoreline to filter pollutants, stabilize the shore edge, and provide important wildlife habitat.

Seed bare soil and cover it with mulch as soon as possible to minimize erosion. For major construction projects and room additions, disturb no more ground than needed.

Never burn yard waste along the lakeshore. The ashes are quite high in nutrients and are easily washed into the lake. Use yard waste on-site as mulch or compost, or dispose of it properly off-site. Don't dump yard wastes along a lake or tributary stream.

Keep fallen leaves out of the ditch or street gutter.

Clean up pet wastes to prevent nutrients and bacteria from washing into the lake.

On icy pavement, use sand or chip the ice off when possible. If using salt, apply it sparingly.

Direct roof downspouts away from driveways and foundations and toward your lawn or planting beds where the water can soak into the soil. Use a splash block directly below your downspouts to help prevent soil erosion. If erosion still occurs, attach some flexible, perforated plastic tubing to the downspout to diffuse the water flow.

Limit your overall use of toxic or hazardous products. Keep them away from drainage ditches, storm sewers, streams, and lakes.

Check for drips under your car and repair leaks immediately to keep oils off pavement. When you can, walk, bike, or take public transportation.

Properly dispose of (or better yet

recycle) used motor oil and other automotive products.

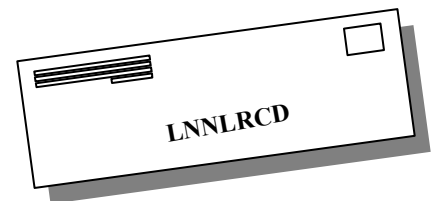
Check underground fuel storage tanks for leaks. Can you smell fuel oil or gas? Can you see oil on the ground or the lake surface?

Wash cars with a no-phosphate detergent on the lawn so soapy water can't quickly drain toward the storm sewer and into your lake.

When it's time to drain your pool, let the water sit a few days without chlorine before draining. This can prevent localized chlorine contamination of your lake and other surface waters.

If you have a septic system, inspect it annually and have it pumped out regularly at a minimum every two to three years. Conserve water, and use water saving plumbing fixtures to maximize the septic system's efficiency. ♦

Survey Results



The Results are In! A big thank you to everyone who filled out and returned their survey! The RCD will be able to use this information to better serve YOU. Out of the over 800 surveys that we sent out, we received 287 responses. A detailed synopsis of the results of the survey can be found online by entering the following link : www.rcdinfo.com/newsinfo.htm or you may call the office at 815 652-2006 to get a paper copy. ♦