NEWSLETTER

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Ideas for Protecting Our Lakes and Watershed

This Month's Focus:

Top Ways Each of Us Can Help Our Lakes

We Love Our Lakes! The calmness of water in a lake works to reduce the stresses of our daily lives. There are lots of ways to enjoy our lakes – swimming, fishing, water skiing or tubing, boating, or, just enjoying the view and watching wildlife and people enjoying the lake.

Our lakes in Rome have become more and more developed since they were first created in the 1970's. Some have suggested that we are 'loving our lakes to death'. None of us intentionally do harm to the lakes. But many unintentional practices over 50 years have impacted the current health of our lakes. It's not a single act that threatens our waters, but rather the cumulative effect of many actions, even though most of these actions may seem inconsequential.

Each of us has a stake in our lakes, and as such, we each can do our part to become more educated on ways we can contribute to the future health and enjoyment of our lakes. **Here are some ideas:**

Plant Native and Diverse Vegetation: Deep-rooted native plants and trees help to absorb water and hold topsoil in place during rain events. As an added bonus, they will add beauty to your property and provide habitat for songbirds and butterflies. Forget about having a pristine lawn right down to the water's edge – lawns are for city properties, not lake lots. Besides, if you

don’t have to mow the lawn, that leaves more time for enjoying the water!

Create a Rain Garden: Rain gardens, which are small, shallow areas filled with beautiful native plants, reduce polluted runoff from entering Wisconsin’s waters. Rain garden plants capture 30% more water than a regular lawn and filter that water into the ground. This reduces the amount of water containing household fertilizers, pesticides, oils, and other contaminants coming from our roofs, lawns or driveways running into the lakes. Not only will rain gardens capture stormwater runoff and beautify your property, they also provide biodiversity that helps butterflies and pollinators survive. The DNR has a helpful guide located at https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/sites/default/files/topic/Stormwater/RainGardenManualPrint.pdf

Pick up Pet Waste and Litter: Dog poop can pollute our waterways with harmful nutrients and bacteria. This can cause problems for local wildlife and make it unsafe for people to swim in. This simple act of picking up pet waste helps reduce the potential of E. coli pollution from washing into our lakes and closing our beaches after rain events.

Reduce or Eliminate the Use of Lawn Fertilizers: Algae blooms are caused by high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus. By eliminating fertilizing (especially in the 35-foot zone along the water’s edge), we can do our part to help stop runoff of these elements into the water. If you draw from the lake to water your property, you have enough nutrients already for your plants – no additional fertilizer is needed.

Let’s all be part of the solution! Please share what you are doing on your property to help our lakes. Tell us what actions you implement and we will use these ideas to inspire others to help our lakes too!

The 14 Mile Watershed Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the improvement of surface and groundwater in the 14 Mile Creek Watershed in central Wisconsin. See us at 14milewatershed.org or https://www.facebook.com/14MileWatershed

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Our mailing address is:
1433 Rapids Trl., Nekoosa, WI 54457

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