NEWSLETTER

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14 Mile Watershed Friends and Supporters . . .

Ideas for Protecting Our Lakes and Watershed
This Month's Focus:
Earthen Dam Safety

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 is an explanation of a recent issue concerning our dams:**

Take Care of Our Dams: Have you noticed the No Parking signs recently placed along the Kings Way dam between Upper Camelot and Sherwood? If you've parked there in the past, this may seem like an unnecessary inconvenience to you in the future – **BUT, this is a safety issue**.

Our dams are categorized as earthen which is an embankment dam primarily built from compacted soil, sand, gravel, and rock to hold back water. These dams are common, often constructed with locally available material. Earthen dams offer advantages like lower cost and adaptability to different foundations but require careful design and maintenance to prevent failures from seepage, erosion, or overtopping.

The stability of this type of dam relies on the mass weight and strength of the materials to resist water pressure. Earthen dams have a high susceptibility to leakage through the embankment and there is the potential for erosion of the slopes by flowing water.

Our dam operators regularly walk the dams, inspecting for soft spots or sinkholes, animal burrows and unwanted tree seedlings. Damage can also be created by vehicles driven on the earthen portions of the dam leading to increased seepage and destabilization of the structure.

These dams are what created our Tri-Lakes and have served us well over the years. It's important for us to maintain them for a long future life. Parking and driving on the earthen portions of the dam could lead to future problems – we ask for your cooperation and understanding of the new signs.

FALL REMINDERS:

- **While it may be tempting to blow fallen leaves into the lake, this practice actually leads to future algae growth.** When fall leaves wash into our lakes, they contribute excess nutrients that can lead to unpleasant algae growth and harm wildlife the following summer. Instead, consider adding to your compost pile, use your mower to mulch them into your lawn or bag them up and taken them to the Transfer Site.
- **Remove floating lake weeds.** If these floaters are left along the shoreline, they'll drop to the sandy lake bottom and provide nutrients for future algae growth.

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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