

# For Our Lakes' Health... and for Our Own!

We tend to think that water is an inexhaustible natural resource here on Earth. But, even though our blue planet is covered with water, this resource is not always accessible or usable. It may be blue, but most of it is salt water. Only 0.3% of the freshwater is available, and mostly found lakes or streams. Even though water is renewed through precipitation, it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain non-contaminated drinking water; a fact which constitutes a major issue for us today.



Many problems affect our lakes: improper landscaping of the shorelines, pollution, cyanobacteria... There are no miracle solutions but there are a few recommendations that may help improve the quality and health of our lakes.

- ➔ Preserve a 10 to 15 metre-wide littoral buffer zone. Reforest it with indigenous plants that are adapted to a riparian environment (river banks and lake shores).
- ➔ Don't use fertilizers (even organic).
- ➔ Avoid urban-style landscaping on your property. Materials such as concrete are impermeable and cannot store and filter water.
- ➔ Don't waste water. Repair leaks and learn how to manage your consumption.
- ➔ Make sure your septic facility meets regulatory requirements and is in good condition. Empty it regularly!
- ➔ Use phosphate-free domestic products.
- ➔ Don't alter the natural course of streams.
- ➔ Vegetation, algae and aquatic plants are useful. Do not weed your lake!
- ➔ Learn to recognize a cyanobacterial (blue-green algae) bloom.
- ➔ Maintain wetlands.
- ➔ Practice healthy navigation! By opting for recreational activities like kayaking, you will maintain both our lakes' and your own health.
- ➔ Spread the word in your community, group of friends, family, neighbours, and all other people in your watershed.



## Protecting our lakes is a collective responsibility

These are only a few examples; there are other good practices that need to be implemented too. Everyone must do their share! In addition to individual practices, we must take action as a society and reach a higher level. For example, we need to think about sustainable land development, learn how to manage road ditches, and improve agricultural and logging practices. It is possible to enjoy our lakes, and if we work together to maintain their health, we will also maintain our own!



Get involved in a lake protection. Assess the lake's health with the **Trousse des lacs**.

which you can get online at  
[www.troussedeslacs.org](http://www.troussedeslacs.org)