

At Your Cottage

Cottage areas allow us to enjoy the beauty of the great outdoors, our lakes, rivers and streams. It is important to respect these natural areas and to protect the fish, wildlife, trees and plants that live within them. Conserving and restoring these areas will preserve them for future generations to value and enjoy.



Take trash to the local garbage dump rather than burning it or leaving it on your land. Chemicals and heavy metals in garbage get into groundwater supplies and nearby streams and wetlands.



Properly dispose of toxic products through hazardous waste disposal programs or take them home for disposal. Check with your municipal government for the nearest disposal facility.



Ensure your boat motors are properly maintained and not leaking oil or gas.



Locate a septic tank system far from the shore to reduce water pollution and maintain your septic system properly by pumping regularly.



Leave natural vegetation alone. It filters run-off and provides habitat for local wildlife.



Keep the water area in front of your cottage in a natural state - it is probably good fish habitat.

Avoid the use of chemicals to control aquatic weeds - use less fertilizer on the land and it will



result in fewer weeds in the water! Remember - if you must use chemicals, you need a permit.



Use small, floating docks to avoid destroying wildlife habitat, altering currents and causing erosion. A new dock requires a permit.



Camp and hike in designated areas only and always pack out what you pack in.



In Your Home

Choices you make in the home can make a real difference to the quality of our lake. You can help improve water quality and the environment by properly disposing of household hazardous wastes, by becoming energy efficient, by reducing the use of toxic products and, by protecting and conserving water resources.



Properly dispose of toxic products such as household cleaners, pesticides, paints, solvents, gasoline and flammable liquids. Check with your municipal government for the nearest disposal facility.



Use non-toxic cleaning alternatives. Look for the EcoLogo label.



Return all syringes and expired medications to your pharmacist for proper disposal.



Insulate your home effectively. Caulk or weather-strip cracks and holes, as well as around windows and doors. Install energy-efficient windows or attach plastic insulating sheets to window frames.



Set your thermostat to 20°C/68°F during the day, and turn it down when you are out or asleep. You save 2% on your heating bill for every degree you lower the thermostat. In the summer, close your blinds and windows when away from home.



Keep your water heater at 50°C/120°F. Service your furnace regularly and change the filter monthly.



Purchase appliances with the Energy Star symbol.





When you leave the room remember to turn off the lights, radio, television and computer.




Keep a bottle of drinking water in the fridge rather than running the tap to get cold water for each individual cup.




 Avoid using the toilet as a wastebasket - never flush garbage of any kind.

 Fix leaks in the toilet and taps. (An estimated 40% of all toilets leak. To test for leaks, put two or three drops of food colouring in the tank and wait a few minutes. If the colour shows up in the bowl, there's a leak). Install low-flow toilets wherever possible or add a toilet

tank displacement device (such as a tightly capped plastic container filled with stones or water).

 Install water saving attachments on taps and showers. Take shorter showers and turn off the tap while brushing your teeth.

 Do laundry only when you have a full load, use cold water and line dry your clothes when possible.

Why should I be concerned about mercury?

Mercury is a silvery liquid and is a persistent, bioaccumulative toxic substance. Once it enters our water, it contaminates our fish, lakes and wildlife, and can also pose a threat to human health.



Where is the mercury in my home?

Thermometers for fevers, cooking, the swimming pool and the outdoors with a silver-coloured liquid contain mercury. Digital, plastic strip or spirit-filled (red) thermometers are safer, mercury-free alternatives.

Manual thermostats have a temperature-sensitive switch that contains mercury. Consider installing a programmable electronic thermostat to save you energy and money, in addition to being mercury-free.

Fluorescent light bulbs contain small amounts of mercury, however they conserve energy. Switch to low mercury content fluorescent lamps.

What can I do about the mercury products in my home?

Contact your local Hazardous Household Waste Depot for information on proper disposal of mercury containing products. Ask your retailer – they may collect old products for recycling.

Learn more about the impacts of mercury at www.ec.gc.ca/mercury.

In Your Yard

A green lawn would be great all summer, but the things we do to make that happen can be harmful to the environment. By following these tips, you can reduce dependence on chemical solutions, and that means fewer chemicals in the air and in the water, and fewer chemicals filtering into the lake.



Never dump motor oil, antifreeze, pesticides, or any toxic materials down storm drains or on the ground. (1 litre of oil can contaminate up to 2 million litres of water.) Dispose of them properly at the nearest hazardous waste facility.



Reduce use of salt or consider alternatives such as sand, to make your sidewalks safe in the winter.



Create a backyard habitat that invites songbirds, butterflies, and beneficial bugs into your yard. Plant native shrubs and ground cover in the place of lawn.



Sweep instead of hosing your driveway, sidewalk, and patio to reduce the pollutants entering storm drains.



To reduce run-off, replace the paved surfaces around your home with vegetation or paving stones; create a rain retention garden; disconnect your drainpipe from the sewer and redirect into a rainbarrel (with mosquito screen) or into your rain retention garden.



Healthy Happy Yard Tips

- Reduce lawn size by planting native shrubs and ground cover in its place. Native vegetation requires less maintenance and water.
- Mow high to promote growth, prevent weeds and pests.
- Feed your lawn compost and grass clippings as fertilizer. Use "natural organic", "slow release" or "composted" fertilizers and avoid using "weed and feed" products. Always follow instructions.
- Tolerate a few weeds (especially clover which adds nitrogen to the soil) or hand pull or spot spray. Overseed lawn areas to crowd out and prevent weeds.
- Aerate compacted soil in the fall to help oxygen, water and nutrients reach the roots.
- Use alternative pest control methods such as pruning infested vegetation, picking harmful insects off plants or spraying them off with water.
- Let your lawn go dormant during dry spells. It will green up with the rain.
- Use manual tools / equipment when possible to reduce air pollution.

On Your Farm

Participate in the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) Program. Environmental Farm Plans document the quality of the environment on individual farms, and identify practical solutions to address environmental and land stewardship issues. All of these recommendations are components of a successful EFP.



Learn about agricultural best management practices and put them to work on your farm.



Keep pesticides away from surface water and wells and store in a dry, properly ventilated and secure area. Purchase only what you will use immediately.



For safe disposal of unused or de-registered pesticides, participate in the Clean Sweep program.



Maintain a wide, native vegetative cover along streams, ditches and run-off channels to prevent erosion, filter nutrients and sediment. Plant native trees on your property to help hold soil in its place.



If you have an abandoned or unused well, you must have it properly plugged and sealed.



Discourage or prevent livestock from entering watercourses and provide an alternative water supply.



Livestock manure must be properly stored, and spread, away from watercourses and wells. Develop a nutrient management plan and a spills contingency plan, especially for liquid manure.



Install proper wastewater disposal (from milk houses, barns and the farmhouse).

To Burn or Not to Burn?

- Select high-efficiency, Energy Star labeled appliances for home heating. If heating with wood, use an EPA-certified wood stove or fireplace insert. Switch or supplement home and hot water heating by using solar or ground-source earth energy.
- Burn wood smart. Use only dry, well-seasoned wood; build small, hot fires and never burn garbage, treated or painted wood, or glossy paper. Consider a new EPA-certified high-efficiency wood stove, fireplace or insert when replacing your conventional / inefficient stove.
- Avoid burning garbage in your yard. The trash you burn in your backyard gives off toxic chemicals into our air, water and soil. These toxins end up in the food we eat and the water we drink. Proper waste disposal through processing, resource recovery or landfilling is always preferable to burning.

In Your Community

Protect water quality and the environment whether you are at work, at school or in your neighbourhood. The individual choices that you make can have an impact on the quality of the environment for everyone. Act locally and think globally!



Work within your community to enact change. Join a local environmental or conservation group and participate actively.



Respect animal habitats in parks and rural areas. Stay on the trails and don't pick the flowers.



Avoid walking in streams, so as to not disturb the sensitive habitats of fish and other aquatic organisms.



Keep your pets on a leash in parks, pick up after them and properly dispose their wastes in the garbage.



At Your School

- Create a naturalized area in your community or schoolyard.
- Bring a "litter-less" lunch to school.
- Use e-mail newsletters or school website for communicating with parents.
- Use less toxic glues, paints, markers and other materials.
- Organize an environmental club or pollution prevention project at your school, and make a class project out of it! Send us a photo of your class and a description of your project and we will post it on Environment Canada's Pollution Prevention Website!

On Your Street

You can improve air quality by following these simple tips for driving and maintaining your car, or by choosing other means of transportation.



Break the automobile addiction! Use public transit, carpool, cycle or walk, whenever possible. (If each of us left our car

at home just once per week, the reduction in emissions would be substantial.)



Buy a vehicle suited for regular use, rather than getting a larger vehicle you rarely need.



Keep your vehicle's engine in top condition with regular tune-ups. Keep tires properly inflated and avoid carrying extra weight in your vehicle.



Combine errands to save gas and reduce exhaust.



Even on cold days, 30 seconds is all you need to warm up your car – otherwise avoid idling.



Wash your car at an approved commercial car wash – they use traps to keep oil, grease and other toxic substances out of your sewers.



Treat all used motor oil, oil filters and antifreeze as hazardous waste. Never dump oil or antifreeze down the drain or onto the soil.

Properly dispose of them at the nearest hazardous waste disposal depot.



Take care not to overfill the gas tank. Spills could enter the sewer and enter our lake.



Environment
Canada

Environnement
Canada

Learn More and Get Involved!

General Links

Environment Canada, Ontario Region

www.on.ec.gc.ca

Ministry of Environment

www.ene.gov.on.ca

Ministry of Natural Resources

www.mnr.gov.on.ca

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Great Lakes

Lake Ontario

Lakewide Management Plan

www.binational.net

Our Great Lakes

www.on.ec.gc.ca/water/greatlakes

Great Lakes Information Network

www.great-lakes.net

In Your Home

The Recycling Council of Ontario

www.rco.on.ca

EcoLogo

www.environmentalchoice.ca

Natural Resources Canada -

Energy Star

www.oe.nrcan.gc.ca/energystar

Office of Energy Efficiency

www.oe.nrcan.gc.ca

In Your Yard

Canadian Pollution Prevention

Information Clearinghouse

www.ec.gc.ca/cppic

Canadian Centre for

Pollution Prevention

www.c2p2online.com

Federation of Ontario Naturalists

www.ontarionature.org

At Your Cottage

Burn It Smart

www.burnitsmart.org

Garbage Burning

www.openburning.org

Fisheries and Oceans Canada -

Working in or Around Water

www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/canwaters-eauxcan/water-eau/index_e.asp

Camp Green Canada

www.campgreencanada.ca

Clean Marine

www.terrachoice.ca/clean_marine.htm

Parks Ontario

www.ontarioparks.com

Parks Canada

www.parkscanada.com

On the Farm

Ontario Ministry of

Agriculture and Food

www.omafra.gov.on.ca

On Your Streets

Air Quality Ontario

www.airqualityontario.com

Canadian Urban Transit Association

www.cutaactu.on.ca

Ontario's Drive Clean

www.driveclean.com

In Your Community

Evergreen -

Bringing Nature to Our Cities

www.evergreen.ca

Canadian Biodiversity Institute -

School Grounds Transformation

www.schoolgrounds.ca

Green Communities Association

www.gca.ca

Kids Websites

Great Lakes Kids

www.on.ec.gc.ca/greatlakeskids

Great Art for Great Lakes -

A "Virtual" Classroom Resource

www.on.ec.gc.ca/community/classroom

Environment Canada Kids - Ontario

www.on.ec.gc.ca/kids_e.html

Environment Canada's

Action and Learning

www.ec.gc.ca/envact_e.html

Youth Round Table on the

Environment

www.ec.gc.ca/youth/yrte_e.html

Yellow Fish

www.yellowfishroad.org

Natural Resources Canada -

Scratching Post Kids Website

www.nrcan-rncan.gc.ca/kids

Big Blue Bus - Kids Corner

www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/canwaters-eauxcan/bbb-lgb/index_e.asp

Teacher's Corner on the Parks

Canada website!

www.parkscanada.gc.ca/edu/index_E.asp



Ontario

Ministry of the
Environment

Lake Ontario is a precious resource

Our lake is an ecosystem, a web of links between people, animals, air, land, and water, each impacting the other. This ecosystem is not just confined to Lake Ontario. There is a whole system of creeks, streams and rivers that flow throughout the basin and end up in our lake. Polluting substances that go into the water, from household chemicals to manure, may eventually reach the lake.

Everyone has a role to play in protecting Lake Ontario. Why? Because we are all connected to the lake in some way, and our choices and actions can make a difference.

Whether you are in a town, a city, or in the country: whether you're a homeowner, a cottager, a farmer, or a student: there are things you can do to restore, conserve and protect Lake Ontario. It's our lake, let's protect it!



Legend



Toxics



**Water
Conservation/
Protection**



Nature/Wildlife



**Energy
Efficiency**



Community