

Van Vliet Lake Stewardship

Property Owner Steps That Will Help

The overriding purpose for the creation of the Van Vliet Lake Association was the maintenance and protection of our lake's quality and health through sound stewardship. Our overall success as an Association in this endeavor is, however, very much dependent on the actions and participation of individual property owners both on and near our lake. In 2004 the Association contracted for the development of a Lake Management Plan. The resulting Plan document completed and published in 2005 (go to www.vanvlietlake.com to view complete text of Plan) included a summary of recommended Lake Management Projects all geared toward the protection of our lake.

Many of the recommendations and projects listed in the Plan can only be accomplished with your help and diligence. Listed below are several of the recommendations/projects we need you to consider as property owners as you go about managing your individual lake parcel. The more recommendations you and your neighbors implement the better chance we will have maintaining the quality and value of Van Vliet Lake for everyone.

- **Make sure your on-site septic system is functioning properly and is being routinely inspected, pumped and maintained.**

Many of the newer property owners on and around the Lake are required by ordinance to have their septic systems inspected and pumped on a periodic basis. Other property owners are not required to do so. All property owners need to make the proper maintenance of their septic systems a priority whether covered by the inspection ordinance or not. A malfunctioning septic system can discharge excess nutrients into the lake promoting, among other things, excess weed and algae growth. Discharge on the ground surface near or on your drain field or toward the water's edge is an indication of a system malfunction that needs to be investigated and resolved as soon as possible. A professional inspection could find others. We highly recommend that those of you not currently covered by the mandatory inspection ordinance have periodic pumping and inspections performed if you are not already doing so. All property owners need to be on the lookout for system malfunctions between periodic inspections and pumpings.

- **Strive to maintain at least a 35 foot deep buffer of natural vegetation along as much of your shoreline as possible.**

Native shoreline plants, trees and other vegetation help to hold soil in place preventing erosion and the release of excessive nutrients into the lake. Plant roots also absorb nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen that if not absorbed end up in the lake promoting undesirable weed

growth. A native buffer also serves as habitat for many species of birds and animals. The health and vitality of your shoreline buffer cannot be over emphasized.

- **If you must have a lawn, try to keep it small and as far away from the water's edge as possible.**

Lawns are not an effective buffer between the shore and the lake. Short grasses do little to prevent run-off and if fertilized can and will add unwanted nutrients to the lake. If you have a lawn, no matter where on your property, that you fertilize please make sure you are using a phosphorus free product. And remember, replacing your lawn with native plants reduces the need for fertilizer, reduces the time needed to mow, increases the natural beauty of the shore land and attracts wildlife. Sounds like the right thing to do to me.

- **Whenever possible, be an advocate for the continued preservation of the Van Vliet hemlock forest stand on the northern shoreline of our lake.**

An extensive and healthy watershed surrounding our lake is vitally important to its health and quality both now and in the future. We are fortunate to have a significant portion of our lake's watershed safeguarded by the Van Vliet hemlock forest. We need to make sure each of us is doing what we can to ensure the preservation of this resource.

- **Always be aware of the extremely serious threat to Van Vliet Lake and others of AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES (AIS)**

Be diligent in cleaning off watercraft going into and out of lakes. Talk to friends and neighbors about the issue and remind them of their responsibility. Spend some time at our boat landing reminding fishermen and women of the importance of cleaning off their boats. Further information on AIS can be acquired by calling Jill Wilm, 686-7396.

Again, please visit www.vanvlietlake.com to view the entire text of our Lake Management Plan. It provides additional information on each of the topics above as well as other recommendations and suggestions that you as property owners can implement to protect and enhance the quality of Van Vliet Lake.