



Score your shore

Lakeshore property owners can self-assess their habitat stewardship through the Score Your Shore manual offered for **FREE** by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The 48-page manual provides a framework for evaluating existing shoreland habitat and ideas for improving it. Download the manual at www.dnr.state.mn.us/scoreyourshore/index.html.

11 TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED

1 Leave fish a place to hide to help them flourish.

2 Rocky bottoms can become fish spawning grounds.

3 Let natural flora grow along the shore to slow runoff. (Access the water via a small pathway, cut at an angle.)

4 If you want to improve your view of the lake or river, practice strategic tree pruning, not culling. (This is critical on sloped yards for stabilizing the soil to prevent erosion.)

5 Trees along the shore provide shade for fish on scorching days, stabilize the shoreline, and filter runoff water before it gets to the lake.

6 Apply fertilizers and pesticides sparingly and away from the water. Or consider selling your lawn mower and letting nature reclaim its own. (Fertilization can lead to fish kills and algal blooms.)

7 With stormwater runoff in mind, plan for pervious driveways and pathways. And use gutters and rain barrels for

buildings. (The slower runoff flows, the less sediment, oil and other dreck it carries to a lake, pond or river.)

8 Clean your boat, motor and gear immediately after taking them out of a body of water so you don't spread invasive species like Eurasian watermilfoil to other water bodies.

9 Maintain or replace your 2-stroke boat motor to prevent leakage. (About 30% of all fuel and oil used in these engines ends up in the water.)

10 Use a floating dock to manage fluctuating water levels. (Avoid dredging the lake bed. Besides damaging fish

habitat, dredged areas often quickly refill with sediment.)

11 Wait for a fish-friendly season before taking on a project around your dock, pier or boat lift. Usually this is late summer or fall when the water level is lowest and after warm-water fish species (perch, bass, sunfish, pike, walleye) have

finished spawning. Note that coldwater fish (trout, whitefish, cisco) generally spawn in the spring or fall. If your project requires you to remove rocks or woody debris, save them and return them to the same area or a nearby area of equal depth. ■

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