



## A Guide to Stewardship, Property Protection and Community Kindness

The following is some helpful information to protect your property, property value and land, lakes and wildlife!

Your property likely has a subsurface septic system and well on the property. These are a couple helpful tips and links for the care and maintenance of your septic and well:

Private well: <https://www.watters-edge.com/home-nature-community>

Septic system: <https://www.watters-edge.com/home-nature-community>

- On the link you will find a helpful list of items that should not be put down the drain/toilet.

This will help keep your septic healthy and save you a lot of money and grief!

- Remind your visitors to not park on the septic system and drain field or block off these areas.

Crushing or damaging your septic system from heavy equipment is a costly repair.

- Be sure to have your septic pumped every three years. Do not pump your septic in the fall or winter.

The bacteria in the septic will help keep it from freezing.

The following are some helpful ways to preserve our lakes, land and wildlife for generations to come:

### 1. Stay at least 200 feet away from wildlife.

Loons and other wildlife usually nest along the protected shorelines in May and June and will incubate their eggs for almost a month. Once the eggs hatch, the small chicks are quite vulnerable. Staying at least 200 feet from nesting loons and loons with chicks (as well as from all wildlife) gives them enough space to safely go about their day. Binoculars are a great way to enjoy wildlife without disrupting their comfort and safety. If you hear the tremolo of a loon, that is a warning call that either you or a predator is too close to the loon or their chicks.

Loons will also do the penguin dance if they feel threatened. Seeing this display is a sign to back away! To learn more about the calls and behaviors of loons: [www.nationallooncenter.org/about-loons](http://www.nationallooncenter.org/about-loons)

### 2. Keep a slow speed near the shoreline and swimming wildlife.

Keep an eye out for nesting areas, especially if you have a wake boat. Creating wakes from boats and jet skis should be limited to open areas in the middle of large lakes. While in/on all motorized watercraft, observe no-wake zones on small lakes and within 200 ft of the shoreline to prevent washing out nesting areas and to protect the shoreline. Docking at established mooring stations also keeps the delicate shoreline safe from erosion. Remember, all fast moving water crafts should always watch out for and stay away from swimming and diving loons.

### 3. Lead-free fishing saves lives.

Lead jigs and sinkers will kill loons, ducks, geese, eagles and other animals if ingested. Lost lead pieces at the bottom of a lake can be mistaken as a pebble by loons and other waterfowl who use the pieces to grind up food. Fishing lead-free and keeping fishing lines and bait out of the water when loons and other wildlife are nearby prevents unnecessary deaths and injuries. There would be nothing more devastating than catching a loon or other waterfowl on the end of your line. Also, if you have a broken line, be sure it is retrieved from the water and disposed of in the trash. Find lead-free tackle distributors: <https://www.watters-edge.com/home-nature-community>

**4. Don't disturb the shoreline and sunken logs and vegetation to keep animals and fish safe and secure.**

Logs and submerged vegetation are often the homes for many creatures, please do not disturb their natural protective areas.

**5. Keep pollutants out of the water to keep the lakes and everyone healthy.**

The ecosystems above and below the water are very delicate, so pollutants can increase phosphorus levels, which increases the amount of algae. This is called an algal bloom and can harm the underwater ecosystem when the blooms die and decompose. During decomposition microbes consume dissolved oxygen, decreasing the oxygen levels and harming or even killing fish and other aquatic organisms. We can all do our part to prevent water pollution and algae blooms by using rest facilities located on shore, not using soaps or shampoos in the lakes and keeping and using trash containers on our boats and on land. While on land, keeping our campfires more than 20 feet from the waters edge also prevents runoff and/or added phosphorus to the lake. Please have a bucket, water source, and clear instructions to extinguish campfires before leaving the fire at the end of the day. Ask guests to take extra special care during dry spells. Also please do not light off fireworks as it pollutes the lakes and disturbs the neighbors, both human and wild.

**6. When exiting the lake, clean your watercraft and gear at the water access or shoreland, taking special care to remove any aquatic plants or organisms like zebra mussels.**

Drain all equipment by removing the drain plug and keep the drain plug out when transporting your watercraft and properly disposing of any unused bait and water in the trash and on land. Invasive species are any nonnative plant or animal that can outcompete or overtake our native species, causing ecosystem imbalances. You can take extra measures at home by spraying watercraft and equipment with high-pressure water or rinsing with hot water then thoroughly drying your boat or using the provided AIS Decontamination stations. Avian botulism due to invasive species has already sadly killed over 100,000 birds in parts of the Great Lakes. However, we can play a large role in stopping the spread of invasive species every time we go out on the water. If you are not using a decontamination station or washing the boat thoroughly with hot high pressure water, including live wells and ballasts, must be dried for a minimum of 5 days. Following is a helpful video to guide you and all boat users clean, drain and dry all boats as they exit the lakes: <https://www.watters-edge.com/videos>

**7. 10 pm is quiet-time.** Please help keep your neighbors happy and friendly.

**8. Look up this great video that summarizes great ways to enjoy the lakes safely and lovingly:**

<https://www.watters-edge.com/videos>

Please visit [www.wapoa.org](http://www.wapoa.org) and [www.nationallooncenter.org](http://www.nationallooncenter.org) for more information.

If you have questions or request information please reach out to Shannon Watters at 218-692-7750 or [shannon@watters-edge.com](mailto:shannon@watters-edge.com)

