

## LAKESMART HOME OWNER SURVEY

**Thank you for helping protect the lake!** This Survey will help you gauge how well your home does that. As you'll see, most questions focus on managing storm water. Your answers will reflect how well your practices protect lake water quality, wildlife habitat, and the value of your home. Taking the survey may also lead you to see your lakeside home in an entirely new way.



LakeSmart is a program of the **Maine Lakes Society**, and it is hosted locally by lake associations. These groups visit properties of interested homeowners and provide them with recommendations that protect the lake. Properties that manage all storm water on site are given special recognition in the form of the coveted LakeSmart Award, the brand of outstanding lake stewardship.

### **Part 1 Home Owner Information**

Owner Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Summer Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Winter Address: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Property Information:**

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Built: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Years Owned: \_\_\_\_\_

Used Year Round or Seasonally? (circle)

Road Association Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **General Questions:**

1. Do you have outside pets? Yes No
2. Do you have a schedule for septic tank pumping/inspection with your service provider? Yes No If yes, how often is this scheduled? \_\_\_\_\_  
Last pumping/inspection? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where is your septic tank and leach field located?  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Inability to locate the septic tank or leach field, or if there is a reasonable doubt that the septic system is working effectively, automatically disqualifies the property from award consideration.*

4. Do you know when your septic system was installed? Yes No If yes, year installed  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you know the size of your septic tank? Yes No If yes, number of gallons \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you use pesticides and/or herbicides? Yes No If yes, how frequently?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you use fertilizers? Yes No If yes, how frequently? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Do you set your mower bar on high (at least 3") when mowing your lawn? Yes No

9. If you have a free standing deck between the home and the water, when was it built?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Estimated size\_\_\_\_\_
10. May Watchic Lake Association or Maine Lakes Society post your name on their websites for participating in LakeSmart? Yes No
11. May Maine Lakes Society use photos taken here for teaching or promotion (no address will be given)? Yes No
12. Do you remove any aquatic plants from the lake near your shorefront? Yes No
13. Do you remove any woody structure, rocks, leaves, or other natural materials that do not pose a hazard to safety or navigation from the lake near your shorefront? Yes No
14. Please draw a rough sketch of your lot, showing which side faces the lake, the approximate dimensions of each side, building locations, and septic/leach field location.

**LoonSmart Merit Award:**

Loon survival as well as loon habitat and health will improve if lake users adopt five simple precautions 1) fish lead-free, 2) remove monofilament line from the lake and its shoreline, 3) stay at least 200 yards away from loons and loon nests when boating, 4) maintain “no wake” speed within 200’ of shore, 5) seal outdoor trash cans and feed pets indoor to deter predators.

1. Will you take these actions? Yes No
2. Will you tell three neighbors about these precautions? Yes No

**Some LakeSmart Suggestions:**

1. If you have outside pets, please clean up their droppings.
2. It's best for the lake *and your septic system* to have a regular pumping/inspection schedule. (If you can't remember when it was pumped last, you probably don't have one!) Pumping/inspection is suggested at least every six years, even for seasonal homes.
3. Use herbicides and pesticides thoughtfully; they're persistent and can harm both aquatic and terrestrial life.
4. Use only phosphorus-free fertilizer; organic products still contain phosphorus unless the package says phosphorus-free. (P turns lawns and lakes green!)
5. If you set the mower bar high (at least 3”) and leave grass clippings, you won't need to feed your lawn with products that can harm water quality.
6. Be sure to check with your town office before doing construction or tree-cutting near shore areas! There are a 100 foot building set-back and other requirements, too.

## **Part 2 Driveway and Parking Area**

Driveways and parking areas can be a large source of lake pollution because they shed water. This section will help you judge the effect these areas may have on lake water.	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>?</b>
1. Are driveway and parking areas well-defined?			
2. Are they appropriate in size to your needs?			
3. Is the surface stable? (If not, you will see gravel washed off to the sides.)			
4. Is the surface free of channels dug by storm water runoff?			
5. Do you have vegetation between the parking/ driveway areas and the lake that can stop and absorb any storm water runoff from these surfaces?			

## **Part 3 Structures and Septic System**

You are looking for what happens to storm water that falls from roofs. This section also looks at septic system maintenance and the effect of the system on groundwater.	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>?</b>
1. Walk around each building and look at the ground under the dripline. Is this area free of channels (narrow trenches) below the driplines? If you have more than one building, combine results and judge whether it is Y,N, or Don't know.			
2. Dripline storm water can channel downslope toward the lake. Look closely at downslope areas. Is your site free of storm water channels from this source?			
3. Is the surface of the leach field clear of trees and woody shrubs? (Tree roots can damage septic system pipes and cause expensive repairs.) If your leach field is raised above the normal level of the ground, give yourself a Yes.			
4. If trees border the leach field, have you had your service provider examine the perforated pipes for damage? (Roots extend as far outward as branches.)			
5. Is the surface of the leach field normally dry and solid underfoot?			
6. Septic malfunction causes an "off" smell. Does your yard smell OK?			
7. Septic malfunction adds nutrients to groundwater, causing plants downstream to grow vigorously. Are downstream plants the same size and color as others?			
8. Do you clean up after your outside pet or pets? (No pets equals a Yes)			

## **Part 4 Yard, Recreation Areas and Footpaths**

This is where you, your family, and friends spend time together. The point here is to balance recreation needs with lake protections. (Hint: lakes like less lawn.)	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>?</b>
1. Walk all around the area surrounding your home - places where you and your family spend time when not on or in the lake - and examine the ground. Is all soil covered by vegetation, pine needles, leaf litter, crushed rock, or mulch?			
2. Is your lawn size appropriate to your recreational and social uses?			
3. Are your recreation areas well-defined?			
4. Do you let pine needles and leaf litter accumulate in places you do not use for socializing, canoe and kayak storage, or games?			

5. If you have gardens, do you cover the bare soil between plants with mulch?			
6. Is the land surface rough and uneven? (Not smooth)			
7. Are your paths covered with mulch, crushed rock, or spaced pavers?			
8. Do your paths prevent storm water from running along them into the lake?			
9. Are your paths curved?			
10. Are your paths less than 6 feet wide?			

### **Part 5 Buffer and Water Access**

The land along the shore is vital for protecting water quality. A “Shoreline Buffer” is a strip of vegetation running the length of the shore that shields the lake from activities on land. The division between yard and buffer area varies from home to home. Design your own buffer by plotting out in your mind a “Lake protection strip” separate from the rest of your land, and answer these questions about that area.	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>?</b>
1. Is there a healthy strip of vegetation - - ground covers, plants, woody shrubs, and trees - - running along the length of your shoreline?			
2. Do you have three layers of vegetation in this strip? (Count one layer for each of the following: <i>ground covers</i> like wintergreen or vinca; <i>plants</i> like ferns, lilies, or hosta; <i>shrubs</i> ; and <i>trees</i> . <i>Pine needles/leaf litter</i> count as a layer, so you could have up to 5 layers. This question asks, “Do you have at least 3?”)			
3. Is this vegetated strip at least 10 feet deep? (Measure distance horizontally from the high water line or inland edge of shoreline rocks away from the lake.)			
4. Do you allow pine needles and leaf litter to accumulate in the buffer strip?			
5. Is the buffer vegetation free of invasive plants like Japanese barberry or purple loosestrife?			
6. Is the land surface rough and uneven? Is there an ice berm along the shore?			
7. Does the path to your dock or swimming access keep storm water from running along it and into the lake?			
8. Is the way (steps, stones, ladder) you get in and out of the water stable so that it doesn’t carry storm water and soil into the lake?			
9. Is the shoreline stable? (Walk out to the end of your dock and look back at the shoreline to either side. If the bank is slumping or undercut by wave action, it is not stable. Also, if a tree’s roots have been weakened by waves, the tree will lean toward the water - this is a sign of instability also)			
10. If concrete or stones have been applied to the shoreline to stabilize it, are they covered with vegetation? (If no reinforcement has been added, answer is Yes)			

<b>Add the total for each column (Yes, No, or?) 22 Yes answers = a High Lake IQ!</b>			
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Return to : Martha Drew, Watchic Lake Association LakeSmart Coordinator, 11 Drew Lane, Standish ME 04084  
Thank you!