Three Ways to ReducE Pollution

on your lakeshore property

Lake home owners have a strong desire to protect their lake. Healthy lakes provide the recreational and aesthetic benefits lakeshore resident’s value. In addition, healthy lakes enhance the lakeshore property values. There are three ways we can reduce pollution and maintain healthy lakes.

**Reduce Runoff**

Rainwater runoff is a major source of water pollution. Rainwater runoff comes from roads, driveways, roofs and lawns. Runoff is not only occurring when streams are full after a rain, but it also occurs when small sheets of water flow over the surface of our lawns and head down to the lake. Runoff carries pollutants, such as oil, dissolved metals, pesticides, suspended solids, pet waste and nutrients, such as phosphorous, which can lead to algae blooms. For lakeshore owners a simple start to managing rainwater is to redirect gutter downspouts that run onto impervious surfaces, such as driveways and sidewalks so they run onto vegetated areas instead. Rain gardens are a good way to capture runoff when greater infiltration is needed.

**Reduce Lawn Size**

Managing rainwater also includes protecting natural areas important for water transport and filtering, such as wetlands, streams, and vegetated buffers near water. A shoreline buffer of natural vegetation traps, filters and impedes runoff. The simplest and sometimes most effective way to recreate this buffer is to stop mowing down to the lake. A smaller lawn with a larger shoreline buffer will help infiltration and reduce runoff. Turf grass, like Kentucky bluegrass, is not a good filter for storm water runoff. Native vegetation filters better and has deeper roots to hold soil in place and enhance aeration and infiltration.

**Maintain Septic Systems**

Finally, for those lake home owners who use septic systems to treat and disperse waste and recycle water, maintenance is critical. Sludge builds up in the septic tank and should be pumped out regularly. If sludge accumulates to the level of the outlet pipe, clogging will occur, which will damage the drain field and reduce the life expectancy of the system. Drain fields can also fail when they are overloaded, either with too much water or too much garbage disposal waste. The average life of a drain field is 10 to 20 years.