

10 successful years for Love Your Lake



Participating in Love Your Lake is a great way to gauge the health of your lake and become a steward of your local freshwater! Over the past 10 years, Watersheds Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Federation have been proud to support waterfront communities coast to coast across Canada through the Love Your Lake program.

Lakes and rivers are the most sustainable source of freshwater and are essential for ecological function and social economic needs. Since Canada has more lake area than any other country, we have a responsibility to protect it. You can improve your lake health and shoreline environment with help from the Love Your Lake program.

A healthy lake starts with healthy shorelines. Love Your Lake is a shoreline evaluation program designed to encourage lakefront property owners to take proactive steps toward improving lake health by creating and maintaining healthier shorelines. Lake associations and organizations are invited to volunteer their lake as participants in the program. If accepted, every property on the lake will be assessed using a standardized shoreline assessment protocol, and landowners will receive a personalized, private property report. These reports contain details on the state of the shoreline and recommended voluntary actions for improving lake health for people and wildlife.

Engaging waterfront communities in stewardship initiatives empowers Canadians to restore, protect, and enhance their freshwater. An easy way to ensure the health of both your lake and waterfront property is to naturalize your shoreline with native grasses, trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. Check out the Natural Edge's [Native Plant Database](#) to find vegetation naturally suited to withstand the climate, soil types, and environmental conditions of your local area.

Naturalized shorelines are cost-effective, ecologically responsible, and aesthetically pleasing. A shoreline rich in native vegetation requires minimal maintenance, protects water quality, moderates temperatures, and offers a nature-based defence against the impacts of climate change. Natural shorelines can even maintain or increase property values. Your shoreline was meant to be naturally beautiful!

The ideal natural shoreline buffer is at least 30 metres wide, but any buffer is better than no buffer! Natural shoreline buffers have numerous ecological and economic benefits including reducing the risk of erosion and mitigating flood frequency and impacts. Native vegetation with complex root systems promotes long-term shoreline stabilization by binding the soil in place. Shoreline buffers also help reduce runoff by slowing surface water so it can reach the soil for proper filtration and redistribution. This capacity to filter rainwater limits the amount of pollution and excess nutrients that reach the waterbody, keeping our freshwater safe and healthy. By acting as natural barriers to slow rising floodwaters and stormwater runoff, naturalized shorelines promote climate change resilience.

Another key benefit of natural shorelines is the creation of wildlife habitat which contributes to a healthy ecosystem and local species diversity. The dynamic nature of natural shorelines enhances habitat connectivity, ensuring wildlife and organic matter can move freely between land and water. You can easily create fish and wildlife habitat along your shoreline by leaving overhanging branches, leaves, fallen trees, woody debris, aquatic vegetation such as water lilies, and emergent plants such as bulrushes. These key habitat features provide shelter, protection from predators, shade, and a food source for many aquatic and terrestrial species. Try clearing a small area through the existing vegetation in your lake to access deeper water, leaving the rest undisturbed. Planting native wildflowers will also help attract local pollinator species like bees and butterflies!

Improve your shoreline's long-term stability and resiliency by enhancing its natural features and its capacity to adapt in response to changing external conditions. Participate in the Love Your Lake program to gain insight into additional recommended actions for your shoreline property that foster a natural line of defence contributing to the health and beauty of Canada's freshwater!

Over the past decade, the Love Your Lake program has successfully assessed 203 lakes which includes more than 46,000 shoreline properties in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Nova Scotia. To see if your lake or waterbody has already been assessed, please visit loveyourlake.ca/lakes-regions. The program's continued success is made possible thanks to dedicated volunteers and generous funding provided by the Rogers Foundation and Canadian Wildlife Foundation.

Learn more about the Love Your Lake shoreline assessment program by visiting LoveYourLake.ca or by emailing loveyourlake@watersheds.ca. For more helpful tips to keep your shoreline property happy and healthy for future generations, visit loveyourlake.ca/self-assessment for a quick online shoreline self-assessment tool.



The Love Your Lake program is coordinated by
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