



LAUREL LAKE ASSOCIATION

LAKE HOMEOWNERS

- **Laurel Lake property owners are not only caretakers of their property but also of the lake they enjoy and cherish.**
- **There are usually ways to conduct home and property upkeep and enhancement within the various state and local shoreland and wetlands regulations. Seek guidance from the many available resources, some of which are listed below.**
- **Build your homeowner's lake stewardship plan today.**

Laurel Lake property owners realize that the value of their property is directly impacted by the overall health and desirability of the lake and its surrounds. As such, they are not only caretakers of their property but also of the lake they enjoy and cherish. And while all homeowners have the right to maintain and make improvements to their property, they also have a responsibility to do so within the parameters of state and local wetland/shoreland regulations. To that end, every lake property owner should be familiar with the [NH Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act \(SWQPA\)](#) which regulates and permits all lakefront property within 250 feet from the shoreline. Additionally, familiarity with Town of Fitzwilliam wetlands ordinances and permitting processes is desirable.

For homeowners along the shores of Laurel Lake it may, at times, feel that these shoreland and wetlands regulations and permitting requirements conflict with desired property upkeep needs and improvements. However, there are usually ways to conduct home upkeep and improvements within these regulations. Before engaging in any project within the buffer zone, it is often useful to first consult with the governing regulations, agencies, and local officials such as the Land Use Administrator in Fitzwilliam. These resources are available to assist homeowners in navigating projects through the various guidelines, regulations, and permitting processes. And keeping your home's septic system up-to-date and properly functioning is an essential element of keeping our lake water clean and healthy. Learn more about modern residential septic systems at this great resource:

<https://www.des.nh.gov/land/septic-systems>.

There are property improvements that can directly contribute to the health and well-being of our lake environment. In New Hampshire, voluntary non-regulatory programs like the [NH LAKES LakeSmart](#) program are outstanding resources and stewardship activities available to lakefront owners. These programs provide environmentally friendly ways to maintain and enhance our lake homes and cottages while also protecting our lake water quality, wildlife habitat, and property values. Additionally, The Laurel Lake Association coordinates several water quality and environmental caretaking initiatives including its Aquatic Invasive Species (weed watchers), lake host, and VLAP water quality assessment programs. Volunteers are always needed for these important water quality programs. A great lake stewardship activity is to volunteer to serve on one of these programs.

Each property owner on Laurel Lake should consider developing their own lake stewardship plan. This "plan" can be as simple as a list of environmentally friendly activities taken on one's property that will keep our lake healthy. This list might include:

- using native plantings and avoiding invasive plants and shrubs; creating flower and shrub beds where they can help capture and mitigate runoff before it makes its way into the lake.
- creating rain gardens and swales as natural ways to manage stormwater runoff
- using low/no phosphorus organic fertilizers in approved areas.
- mixing clover into new grass seed while maintaining one's lawn.
- using eco-friendly household products when cleaning, controlling unwanted insects and critters, and managing snow and ice on walkways and driveways.
- refraining from dumping yard waste into the lake.
- maintaining a strong and healthy natural shoreline.

NHDES Protected Shoreland Homepage - <https://www.des.nh.gov/land/waterfront-development/protected-shoreland>

NH SWQPA Summary of Standards - <https://www.des.nh.gov/document/shoreland-water-quality-protection-act-swqpa-summary-minimum-standards>

NHDES Waterfront Development - <https://www.des.nh.gov/land/waterfront-development>

NHDES Pesticide Use in the Protected Zone - <https://www.des.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt341/files/documents/2020-01/sp-3.pdf>

NHDES Lawn Care in the Protected Zone - <https://www.des.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt341/files/documents/2020-01/sp-2.pdf>

NHDES Vegetation Management for Water Quality - <https://www.des.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt341/files/documents/2020-01/sp-5.pdf>

NHDES Shoreland Accessory Structures - <https://www.des.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt341/files/documents/2020-01/sp-6.pdf>

Shoreland Permitting - <https://www4.des.state.nh.us/lrmonestop/>

Soak Up the Rain NH - <https://www4.des.state.nh.us/soaknh/>

NH LAKES LakeSmart Program - <https://nhlakes.org/lakesmart/>

Washtenaw County (MI) Rain Gardens - <https://www.washtenaw.org/3845/Rain-Gardens-on-the-Map>

NH Homeowners Guide to Stormwater Management - <https://www.des.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt341/files/documents/2020-01/homeowner-guide-stormwater.pdf>

2025 NH Stormwater Management Manual -
<https://universitysystemnh.sharepoint.com/teams/UNHSC/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fteams%2FUNHSC%2FShared%20Documents%2FWebsite%2Ffiles%20renamed%20for%20repository%2FNH%20stormwater%20Manual%2FNH%20stormwater%20Manual%202025%2Epdf&parent=%2Fteams%2FUNHSC%2FShared%20Documents%2FWebsite%2Ffiles%20renamed%20for%20repository%2FNH%20stormwater%20Manual&p=true&ga=1>

Landscaping at the Water's Edge -
https://extension.unh.edu/sites/default/files/migrated_unmanaged_files/resource004159_rep5940.pdf

Fitzwilliam Conservation Commission & Wetlands Resources - <https://fitzwilliam-nh.gov/conservation-commission>

Laurel Lake Watershed Study - <https://www.laurellakeassn.com/water-quality-environment>

Laurel Lake Association Volunteer Programs - <https://www.laurellakeassn.com/water-quality-environment>

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