

MLWA Corner: Do's and Don'ts

Detergents:

Do use non-phosphate detergents. (Check the labels on detergents purchased outside of New York.) Phosphate detergents add more phosphorus to the lake, contributing to alga growth.

Don't wash anything in the lake (e.g. dishes, your dog, yourself) with soap or a cleaning agent, and don't wash cars or boats near lakes, streams or drainage ditches. These activities will put phosphorus directly into the water. Runoff should be diverted to vegetated areas and allowed to seep into the ground where the phosphorus can be removed.

Runoff from driveways, roofs, lawns, etc.:

Do prevent driveway, roof, lawn, etc. waste from running directly into lakes and streams. Detain in depressions or divert flow to flat, wooded areas. Flowing water carries phosphorus-laden sediment. Dispersing water allows it to filter into the soil where sediment and phosphorus are filtered out.

Roads:

Do plant vegetative buffer strips along roads and stabilize road ditches by seeding or ripraping. Use natural vegetation whenever possible. Plants slow runoff from the roads and help to remove sediment and phosphorus before they reach lakes or streams.

Don't allow water to run directly off roads into lakes or streams. Water running off roads contains sediment, phosphorus and pollutants from cars.

Houses, decks, sheds:

Don't build close to the water.

(APA regulations specify 50 to 100 foot setback distances, depending on land use area). Setbacks protect the lake because shoreline disturbance dramatically increases sedimentation in the lake.



Sand beaches:

Don't build new beaches (placing sand in the lake requires a permit from DEC, and may require an APA wetlands permit). Sand contains phosphorus. Sand which is not stabilized by vegetation washes into the lake, where it accelerates filling of the lake and provides poor bottom habitat for fish and wildlife.

Filling/dredging:

Don't fill or dredge along

the lakeshore unless necessary. (Both activities require a permit from DEC, and may require an APA wetlands permit.) Filling and dredging stir up sediment and impair natural habitat.

Hazardous materials:

Do store hazardous materials in a contained area. Containment prevents contamination of water supplies and lake waters by undetected leaks.

Don't dispose of oil, paint thinner or chemical products on the ground. These products cannot be removed by soil and can contaminate ground water and lake water.

Mirror Lake Watershed Association meets at 5 p.m. every second Monday at the Peacock Park Beach House. Your participation is encouraged.