



Lake Shoreland Protection

Lakes are recognized worldwide for the immeasurable value they offer our planet. More than aesthetically pleasing, lakes provide habitat to a rich variety of species as well as water for drinking, agriculture, and recreation. Unfortunately, the quality of water supporting such ecosystem services continues to deteriorate. As a result of shoreland development, lake ecosystems are increasingly stressed by altered hydrologic regimes and nutrient over-enrichment. Ecosystem disturbances allow for the increased colonization of invasive species and the proliferation of harmful cyanobacteria blooms. Furthermore, lakes and tributaries without “living” shorelands are less resilient to the effects of climate change as they no longer have the ability to absorb and dissipate storm energy nor access to historical floodplains. Protection of lake shorelands is critical to ensuring that lakes and humans can adapt to meet the demands of our changing world. NALMS recommends that we more highly prioritize maintaining lake shorelands in their unimpaired state, so that we may save the best of what is left for current and future generations.

It is necessary that shoreline protections be extended to inland surface waters to protect freshwater resources and secure water reliability. Actions to slow and reverse shoreland deterioration will be more successful if addressed in earlier stages of decline rather than for lakes that have significantly deteriorated in water quality. Furthermore, intentional effort must be made to ensure that the diversity of the community is reflected in the committees responsible for lake management, policy development and public outreach. Socially equitable and environmentally just actions must combat gentrification, minimize pollutant exposure, ensure affordable housing, and provide public access to lakes. This further underscores the importance of supporting watershed-wide issues with funding appropriations specific to lake systems; lakes support the people, and we support the lakes.

As such, NALMS supports the following for Lake Shoreland Protection:

- NALMS supports changes in the implementation of US EPA CWA policy to fully support waterbody management on an equal basis with the currently emphasized point-source and watershed controls. This can be accomplished through the restoration of Section 314 funding that must be enhanced with Healthy Lakes programming and environmental justice objectives.
- It is NALMS position that lake shorelands should be managed in a way that prioritizes the protection of its undeveloped condition. If shorelands have been altered, actions should be taken to restore shorelands to a heavily vegetated condition.

- It is NALMS position that protection and restoration of lake shoreland be prioritized with the goal of providing healthy lake water quality for the health and security of all community members.
- NALMS supports opportunities to identify and coordinate lake shoreland management with community partners at every step of the process.

Lake shoreland protection practices are numerous though not ubiquitous. They are varied yet founded on lake system science and are most successful when the community is a part of the solution. It is recommended that shoreland protection policies be implemented wherever there are lakes and that they include the best management practices based on the best available science. Existing legislation can be improved by including tri-annual septic maintenance around waterbodies as well as prescribing regular lake monitoring practices. Engaging all water users in the development of communal practices will harness our collective power and remind us of the responsibility we all share in caring for our lakes.

Adopted by the NALMS Board of Directors on November 4, 2021