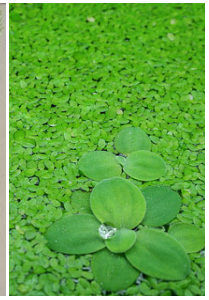
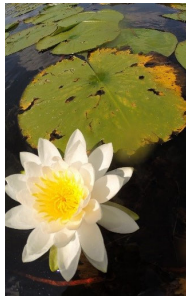
Preserve Native Aquatic Plants

Native aquatic plants play an important role in maintaining a balanced and healthy inland lake aquatic ecosystem. Native aquatic plants provide important habit for fish and aquatic insects, help cycle and absorb available nutrients that might otherwise be available for the production of unwanted algae blooms, produce dissolved oxygen and maintain water clarity by preventing the re-suspension of particulate organic matter in the water column.


Coontail


Duck weed


White water lily

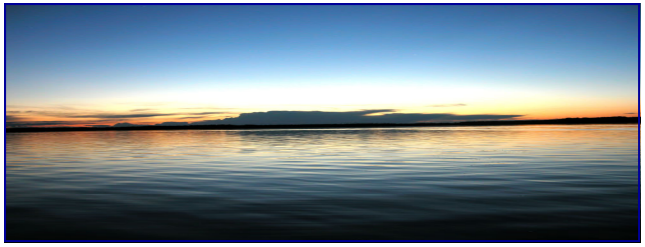
Learn to Identify Exotic Species

The priceless aquatic ecosystems of thousands of Michigan's inland lakes and streams have been profoundly affected by foreign aquatic plant and animal species. These highly adaptive and aggressive exotic species have severely damaged or altered many of our most valuable freshwater resources by destroying native plants and animals and their associated habitats. The most effective strategy for lakefront property owners is to detect and manage exotic infestations while they are still in their early stages.


Eurasian water milfoil


Purple Loosestrife

Michigan Lakes and Streams Association, Inc. is a non-profit, primarily volunteer organization dedicated to preserving, protecting and effectively managing Michigan's vast treasure of inland lakes and streams as well as advocating for the protection of riparian property rights. Our members include lake and stream associations, individuals, corporations and various non-profit advocacy groups that share our concern for the future of our freshwater heritage and associated natural resources.



Scan this QR code with the picture app on your phone to be taken to more information on these topics on the MLSA website!

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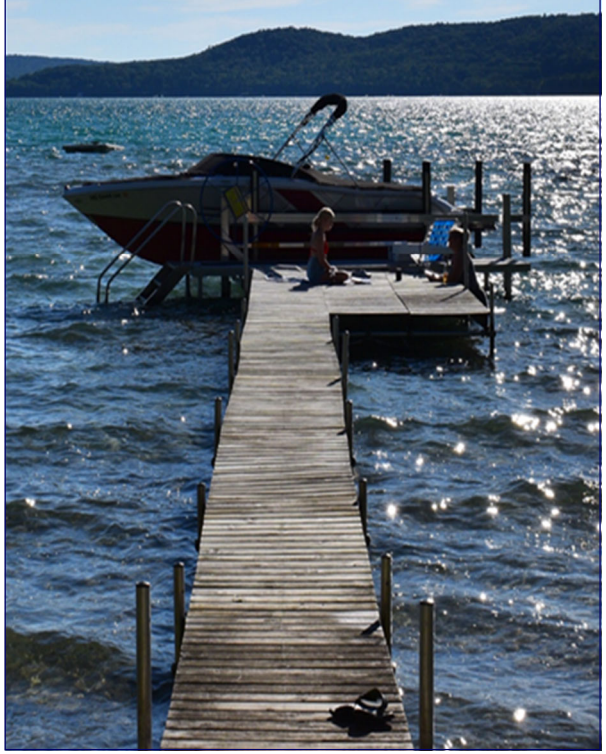
Lake & Stream-Side Living

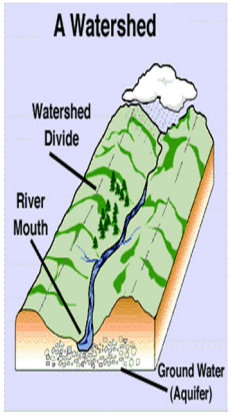
Best Practices for Living on a Lake or Stream



Understand & Protect Your Inland Lake and Stream

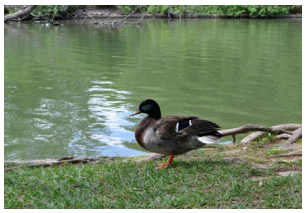
The body of water you live by and love is a living freshwater ecosystem. Each of Michigan's 11,000 lakes can be defined and classified by the unique and highly variable interaction of physical, biological and chemical components at work in or near your inland lake's basin. The 36,000 miles of streams in Michigan are also important freshwater ecosystems that provide a crucial link and travel pathway for the watershed. Developing a basic understanding of your lake or stream's ecosystem is an important first step in getting more involved in preserving and protecting these fragile freshwater resources.

Explore Your Watershed



Inland lake and stream water quality is a direct reflection of the ecological health of the watershed in which your lake or stream is located. A watershed is defined as the land that water flows across or through on its way to a common stream, river, or inland lake. By exploring the wetlands, streams, rivers and other natural features within your watershed, you will begin to develop an understanding of how these features directly affect the overall quality of your inland lake.

Ditch Lawn Fertilizer



The excess amounts of nutrients in fertilizers may degrade freshwater quality of your lake or stream and harm the things living in it. Phosphorus supplemented lawn fertilizers in particular have often been identified as a prime source of excess nutrients that may lead to algae blooms and/or explosive growth of aquatic plants within your lake. In recent years, lawn care product companies have developed effective alternatives for riparians concerned about their inland lake ecosystems. While it is best to not use fertilizers around bodies of water, these phosphorus-free fertilizers are a good alternative. You can find these products at local retail outlets.

Create a Rain Garden

Mark Bugnaski Photography

Many of Michigan's areas by / near lakes or streams have lost the native vegetative cover and natural woody structure that once provided a natural buffer between water's edge and the surrounding land. The loss of these features may lead to high volumes of nutrient laden storm water runoff. This runoff can negatively impact your lake or stream and can cause problems in the watershed as a whole. Creating a simple rain garden on your lakefront property can help re-establish this natural buffer and prevent harmful nutrients from directly entering your inland lake or stream's ecosystem.

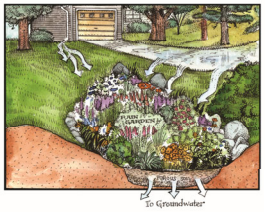
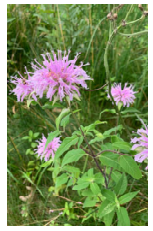


Illustration by Glenn Wolf

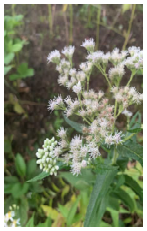
Bring Back Natural Shorelines

Thousands of Michigan's inland lakes have been negatively impacted by the destruction or degradation of the beneficial natural features that once flourished on most inland lake shorelines. Densely vegetated areas that provided buffers and natural resistance to shoreline erosion have been replaced by well manicured lawns and seawalls. Attractive and affordable techniques have been developed in recent years that allow riparians to restore beneficial natural shoreline features to their lakefront properties by using native vegetation, such as:

White Turtlehead



Wild bergamot



Common Boneset

Great Blue Lobelia

Enroll in MiCorps

Michigan Clean Water Corps

The **Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP), Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program (VSMP)** and the **Volunteer Stream Clean-up Program (VSCP)** are some of our nation's largest and most successful volunteer monitoring efforts. These unique, high quality and affordable programs are part of the Michigan Clean Water Corps (MiCorps), are managed by EGLE, and Michigan Lakes and Streams Association plays an important role along with MSU and the Huron River Watershed Council. Enrolling in these programs allows you to collect important data about your water that can reveal significant changes in the overall quality of your inland lake or stream.