

Previous Lake Preservation Committee articles can be read at <http://www.latonkaweb.com/>

Previously Lake Preservation Committee articles include:

- Stewardship, Service, and Self-Interest
- Mom Always Warned: Don't Pickup Hitchhikers
- Improving Lake Water Quality: GOOSED!
- Improving Lake Water Quality: Green Lawns make Green Lakes
- Improving Lake Water Quality: Trees – “If I never see another, it will be too soon!”
- Improving Lake Water Quality with Vegetative Buffer Strips

Penn State University is one of the leading Universities in the country in the area of grass and turf. Their experts say that although some lawns can benefit from a yearly dose of nitrogen to stay green and healthy, most soils have sufficient phosphorus to grow good grass without adding a chemical fertilizer.

Ask your lawn-care specialists to consider reducing or eliminating the fertilizer treatments. If you must use fertilizers, then insure those treatments contain no Phosphorus. For you do-it-yourselfers, look for products that contain no Phosphorus. The middle number on fertilizer bags indicates the amount of Phosphorus. Look for the middle number to be zero; this indicates it's Phosphorus-free! More and more manufactures are producing very low or no phosphorus fertilizers.

As Lake property owners and residents, we are all in this together. Come on! Make the switch and stop 'P'ing on your yard! Living here at the lake calls us to sometimes put our self-interests second. It calls us to act as stewards of this precious resource. It has never been easier for homeowners to switch to P-free (phosphorus-free) fertilizers. Over the long haul doing so will help reduce algal and weed growth in the lake—and you can still have a beautiful lawn!

What else can I do?

Riparian buffers and shoreline natural-scapes also help to improve water quality. The added vegetation helps to prevent road and yard runoff. Road and yard runoff is responsible for additional nutrients being deposited around a lake's shoreline. These nutrients deplete dissolved oxygen and promote the growth of algae and aquatic plants.

All lake residences can help by adding native landscapes or riparian buffers along any yard runoff area, land neighboring a tributary and lake shorelines. A riparian buffer 5 to 6 feet wide is a great start! Ernst Conservation Seed in Meadville creates special mixes of native plants that will sprout throughout the season. Start now and in 2 or 3 years you may have restored your shoreline at a very minimal cost. Each one pound bag cost about \$36. One bag (i.e., one pound) of seed will cover approximately 2,000 square feet. You can contact Ernst at 800.873.3321 or visit their website at <http://www.ernstseed.com/products/planting-guide/riparian-sites/>

Also, did you know that mulching your grass, instead of bagging, will reduce the need for fertilizer by as much as 25% or more? Mulching alone helps to reduce one entire application a year. If you mulch, consider reducing your use of fertilizers by a third. If you bag, compost it or take to the Association's dump/compost and not the nearby vacant lot. Either approach will help reduce the amount of excess nutrients entering the lake.

Finally, join the growing number of your neighbors who are taking the pledge to stop 'P'ing on their yards!

Don't 'P' On Your Lawn!

*Adapted from Lawn Care Tips at <http://www.lawntolake.org/>
and LGA News April 2007 By Candace Page, Free Press Staff Writer*

Presented by the Lake Preservation Committee

"Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little." –E. Burke

Sparky get off the lawn! Lake Latonka as well as lakes all across Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York and much of the country are facing a much more serious problem than Sparky. The problem is homeowners. Yep, the bigger problem is homeowners 'Pee-'ing on their yards.

The "P" stands for phosphorus—one of if not the most problematic pollutants here at Lake Latonka and many other lake communities. Phosphorus is a nutrient found in most lawn and garden fertilizers. It is also one of the main culprits for unsightly, smelly, pea-soup colored water, as well as excessive weed growth and algal blooms. When fertilizers run off from lawns into culverts and eventually into lakes, the result can be green (pea soup) lakes.

Unfortunately the 'P' doesn't just wash into the lake and go away. It gets into the silt and soil and creates highly nutrient-rich sediment. Such highly nutrient-rich sediment may be good for farming, but it is not good for our lake. Many lake communities have banned the use of fertilizers containing Phosphorus in order to promote the health and preservation of their lake. Reducing both the Phosphorus entering the lake and the nutrient-rich sediment is one of the best ways to reduce the weeds, algal blooms and greenish pea-soup during the summer.

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But what about my green yard?

Often a green yard makes for a green lake. It is a safe bet that most or all of us would say 'yes' to the idea of preventing the polluting of our lake. How many of us are ready to put our green yards second to the interest of caring or preserving our lake's ability to support the community we've all come to cherish?