

# WHAT LANDOWNERS CAN DO TO PROTECT WATER: Quality & Quantity



Everything is connected through the water cycle and it is important to remember everyone lives downstream. What you do today can affect local water quality and quantity. In fact, since the quantity of water in any given source can greatly affect the quality of that water, it is important to protect both quality and quantity.

In order to ensure a healthy of supply of water now and into the future there are many actions landowners can take.



These are some of the things you can do to protect your water:

## Everyone, Everyday

- **Conserve water.** Take steps to conserve water around your home and in your yard. This will save you money and help the environment. **Some practical ideas for conserving water include:**

### Water Conservation In the House:

- Turn off the tap while you brush your teeth.
- Plug and fill the sink to wash your face or when you wash the dishes.
- Keep a jug of cold water in the fridge instead of running the tap until the water turns cold.
- Use efficient showerheads, taps and toilets. If you don't have a low flow toilet, reduce your water use by placing a weighted plastic bottle filled with water in the water tank of your toilet. Low-cost "inserts" for the toilet tank are an alternative to plastic bottles. With a toilet insert, a family of four could save 45 000 litres of water per year. Toilet inserts are available at most hardware and plumbing supply stores.
- Use a faucet aerator. Faucet aerators, which break the flowing water into fine droplets, are inexpensive and can be easily installed in sinks to reduce water use by as much as 60 percent while still maintaining a strong flow.
- Detect and repair leaks in the pipes, toilets and taps around your home.
- Only use water-dependant appliances, such as washing machines and dishwashers, when they are full and then choose shorter cycles. Better yet, upgrade to water- and energy-efficient models.
- Scrape dishes, instead of rinsing them, before loading the dishwasher.
- Compost organic waste instead of using the garbage disposal. Garbage disposals need running water to operate properly.

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#### Water Conservation In the Yard:

- Use a rain barrel to catch water from your eavestrough downspout and use this to water your lawn and garden.
- Detect and repair leaks in hoses and sprinklers outdoors.
- Use a broom to clean your driveway – not your garden hose.
- Plant native groundcover, plants and grasses that are heat and drought resistant, require less water and care, and are cheaper to maintain.
- If you do have a lawn, keep it well aerated, mow high and water it only in the early morning or late evening and only as much as needed, which is about 2-3 centimetres per week.
- In the case of walkways and patios, consider using interlocking paving stone to minimize runoff and maximize water retention in the soil.



- **Be an avid recycler.** Recycling paper products, glass, metals and plastics cuts down on pollution and also reduces the amount of water we use. Manufacturing recycled paper uses 58% less water than making paper from virgin wood pulp. Making glass from recycled materials cuts related air pollution 20% and water pollution 50%.
- **Dispose of hazardous waste properly.** Take unused paints, cleaners, pesticides, and medical prescriptions to your local hazardous waste facility. Take used engine oil to recycling facilities. Use drop cloths or tarps when working with hazardous materials such as paints, driveway sealers or wood stain to prevent spills from leaking into the ground. If a spill occurs, clean it up with an absorbent material such as kitty litter or sawdust and scoop the contaminant into a container.
- **Use non-toxic products for cleaning** and environmentally-friendly soaps, shampoos and personal care products. Remember that what you use in your house goes back down your drain.
- **Clean up pet waste** which contains nutrients and pathogens that can run into storm sewers during a rain storm.
- **Prevent pollutants from entering into runoff** by reducing or eliminating the use of pesticides, fertilizers, sidewalk salts and by not over-watering your lawn.
- **Take care when refueling gas tanks** for cars, lawn mowers, chainsaws, weed trimmers or other machinery to avoid spilling fuel on the ground. Also take care when changing engine oil. One litre of gas or oil can contaminate a million litres of groundwater.
- **Take your car to commercial car washes** designed to prevent pollutant runoff from entering storm sewers. Use commercial car washes that use water efficient sprays, reducing their water consumption.
- **Keep your septic system in proper working order** and empty the tank regularly.
- **Protect and maintain your private well.** Wells provide pathways for contaminants to enter the groundwater. If you have a well be sure it is sealed properly and if you own a well you no longer use, have it properly decommissioned by a licensed well technician. Test your well water regularly to ensure the water is safe to drink.
- **Stay informed and get involved** in your local source protection process. To find a Drinking Water Source Protection Planning Region or Area near you go to [www.conservation-ontario.on.ca](http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca)





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### If you run an Agricultural Operation:

- **Prevent pollutants from seeping into the ground or entering into runoff** by reducing or eliminating the use of chemicals and fertilizers on your land. If you haven't already, consider developing and implementing a Nutrient Management Plan.
- **Manage animal waste on farms** to prevent water contamination. If you operate a farm, contact your local Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) at [www.ontariosoilcrop.org](http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org) or your local conservation authority at [www.conservation-ontario.on.ca](http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca) for information about workshops you can take to assist you in developing an Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) for your farm business.
- **Protect the vegetation along the banks of ponds, streams and lakes** to help control erosion, provide food for aquatic life, and maintain cooler water temperatures necessary for some species of fish.
- **Manage livestock grazing.** Overgrazing exposes soil and increases erosion. Keep livestock out of ponds, rivers and streams and other sensitive areas such as wetlands. This not only protects the natural areas around the pasture, but keeps your herd productive and happy. For information on local funding programs to assist you with fencing and other projects contact your local conservation authority.
- **Store chemicals in a dry, properly ventilated and secure area.** Keep chemicals and pesticides away from surface water, wells and other vulnerable areas.
- **Properly install and operate fuel storage tanks** to prevent spills.



### If you own Land Along or Around Water:

- **Maintain a natural shoreline.** A buffer zone covered with native plants reduces the contaminants that enter the water.
- **Confine water access** to 10 percent of your total water frontage.
- **Avoid bringing sand from an outside source** to create any artificial beach areas.
- **Wash your boat on land** using non-toxic cleaners.
- **Use biodegradable soaps** when you wash yourself, your dishes or your clothes and never wash in a lake, river or stream.
- **Keep boat motors properly maintained** or upgrade to a more efficient four-stroke motor if possible.
- **Take care when refueling** boats, lawnmowers or other machinery when you are near or on the water.



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## For More

### water saving tips

these are some great websites you can access:

#### The Groundwater Foundation:

[www.groundwater.org/kc/kidsconserve.html](http://www.groundwater.org/kc/kidsconserve.html)

#### Environment Canada:

[www.ec.gc.ca/water/en/info/pubs/e\\_pubs.htm](http://www.ec.gc.ca/water/en/info/pubs/e_pubs.htm)

#### Earth 911:

[www.earth911.org/water/water-conservation/](http://www.earth911.org/water/water-conservation/)

#### US Environmental Protection Agency:

[www.epa.gov/nps/chap3.html](http://www.epa.gov/nps/chap3.html)

#### Water Use it Wisely:

[www.wateruseitwisely.com/100ways/nw.shtml](http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/100ways/nw.shtml)

### For More Information on Protecting Water in Your Area

Please contact your local Source Protection Region or Area:



Conservation  
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# [www.conservation-ontario.on.ca](http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca)

For more information on the Source Protection Program, please visit the Ministry of the Environment's website:

[www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/water/cleanwater/sourceprotection.php](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/water/cleanwater/sourceprotection.php)

This project has received funding support from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment.  
Such support does not indicate endorsement by the Ministry of the contents of the material.