

The Les Cheneaux Islands Association

"promoting clean water for life"

Shoreline Protection Tips for Waterfront Property Owners



The natural beauty and recreational opportunities of the Les Cheneaux Island area can be appreciated for generations into the future -- if we manage these resources carefully now.



*"When I think of Michigan, I think North...
Of a classic meandering shoreline
And rocky rustic tree covered points
Of quiet evergreen and birch fringed bays
And Islands of evergreen trees..."*
"Mort" Mortensen

The Les Cheneaux Islands are a unique archipelago of 36 islands situated along the Northern Lake Huron shoreline. The area has long been home to its residents and many seasonal visitors who have found solace and relaxation in its clear, blue channels and whispering cedars.

Les Cheneaux also is home to many rare and threatened species, including the Dwarf Lake Iris, Pitcher's Thistle, bald eagles and osprey.

Summers in the islands are marked by the vivid greens of maple, tamarack, and poplar trees, while clear, cool waters welcome swimmers, boaters, and anglers. In the fall, the area becomes quiet as summer visitors leave, and the air fills with red and golden leaves from maple and poplar trees. Winter snow and ice blanket the islands in white splendor, and melting waters of the spring thaw leave residents aching to see Lake Huron again.

So much about this place relies on clean water and a healthy, diverse shoreline. More than 3,000 acres of Les Cheneaux wetlands and waterfront are privately owned, and it is the responsibility of each owner to maintain the health of these natural gifts.



Lawn Care

Everyone has their own idea of what constitutes an attractive lawn. However, we should all be aware that many common lawn maintenance practices can have negative impacts on water quality. For instance, lawn and garden fertilization can accelerate nutrient enrichment of lakes and streams. This process, called eutrophication, is one of the greatest threats facing northern Michigan surface waters. Studies on some lakes have indicated that lawn fertilization is the largest source of nutrients.

Shoreline Protection Lawn Care Tips:

- Maintain or plant a green-belt (a row of vegetation) along the shoreline.
- Locate your compost pile away from the shoreline.
- Test your soil to determine the most appropriate fertilizer needed. Soil tests are available from MSU Extension for a nominal fee. For information call (616) 348-1770.
- Use fertilizer that is low in nitrogen and is phosphorus free.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn to help retain moisture and nutrients.
- After raking leaves, add them to your compost pile. Don't dump leaves on or near the shoreline.
- Avoid or minimize the use of pesticides whenever possible.
- Landscape using a variety of plants that are naturally free of major pests and dis-



eases, and that are well adapted to our climate and to soil, light, and moisture conditions on-site.

Septic Systems

Septic systems when designed, constructed, and maintained properly can provide excellent wastewater treatment for homes in rural areas. Unfortunately, nothing is perfect and when problems with septic systems arise they can leach nutrients and bacteria to the lake.

Septic System

Maintenance Tips:

- Have your septic tank inspected and pumped out every 3-5 years based on occupancy.
- Conserve water by installing water conservation devices such as low flow showerheads, faucet aerators, and toilet tank inserts. Every flush of the toilet uses approximately 5 gallons of water without a water-saving device. By contrast, an ultra-low flush toilet uses only 1.5 gallons.
- Reduce water use by turning off the faucet while brushing your teeth and washing only full loads of laundry.
- Carefully use household hazardous materials such as drain cleaner, paints, varnish and motor oil, and don't dispose of these substances down the drain.
- Recycle, DON'T DUMP, used oil and anti-freeze.

Shoreline Erosion

Lakeshores are areas of dynamic energy. Waves, currents, and ice move soil particles toward, away from, and along the shoreline. Erosion is a natural process, but human activities, such as vegetation removal, dredging, filling, or construction can accelerate shoreline erosion.

Shoreline Erosion

Prevention Tips:

- Preserve the rocks and vegetation which naturally occur along the shoreline. Natural vegetation serves as a filter to remove contaminants from lake water.
- Prevent runoff from roofs and driveways from flowing to the shoreline.

Shoreline Erosion Tips Continued:

- Maintain near shore berms pushed up by ice action, because they help to prevent shoreline erosion.
- Preserve shoreline wetlands.
- During construction, implement proper soil erosion control measures to prevent excess sediment from washing into the lake.

Power Boats

Motor boating is an exciting way to enjoy the Les Cheneaux Island area and explore the channels and bays. Power boats, if not maintained or operated properly, can have impacts on water quality.

Motor Boat Pollution

Prevention Tips:

- Maintain your motor, since well-tuned motors contribute the least amount of pollution.
- Obey no-wake zones and avoid shallow areas to prevent disturbing vegetation or bottom sediments.
- Take precautions to avoid fuel or oil spills.
- Prevent the introduction of exotic species (such as zebra mussels) to Les Cheneaux water, especially if your boat is used in any of the Great Lakes or other inland lakes by:

Draining the bilge, motor, live well, and transom while on land;

Inspecting the boat, trailer, and anchors and removing any visible plants or animals before leaving the water body; and

Emptying bait buckets on land.



General Shoreline Stewardship Tips:

Shoreline living offers wonderful opportunities to experience your waterway. Through responsible stewardship of shoreline property, you can maintain these opportunities for your children and grandchildren. Below are some other suggestions of ways you can help to protect the water quality of the Les Cheneaux Islands.

- Place campfire rings as far back from the lake as possible. When fires are cool, collect ashes and add to compost or dispose of properly.
- Maintain areas of aquatic vegetation (such as rushes or reeds) in the shallow areas of the shoreline. These provide valuable wildlife habitat, and protect the shoreline against erosion.
- Don't feed waterfowl, they play a role in the spread of swimmer's itch.
- Pick up pet waste to prevent it from making its way to the lake in a rainstorm.
- Use an indoor shower (or outdoor if hooked to a septic system) for bathing rather than the lake.
- Use biodegradable soap and detergent..
- Divert rain gutters to unpaved areas where water can soak into the ground before reaching the the lake.
- Voice your opinion on local development or construction projects that affect water quality in your waterway. You can do this by attending local government meetings or by writing or calling your local officials.
- Share information with your neighbors. Any lake benefits or suffers from the cumulative actions of all the surrounding landowners.
- Support local organizations such as The Les Cheneaux Islands Association, The Les Cheneaux Foundation, The Les Cheneaux Chamber of Commerce, The Les Cheneaux Economic Forum, The Nature Conservancy, The Little Traverse Conservancy, etc. who strive to preserve the area's water quality.

The Les Cheneaux Islands Association in conjunction with The Natural Resources Task Force of the Les Cheneaux Economic Forum is working to ensure that the Les Cheneaux Islands waterway remains clean and clear for future generations. You can help to protect this beautiful area by following the suggestions in this brochure. Some of these things you may already be doing; keep up the good work! If you would like to do more, please contact the organizations listed below.

If you are interested in joining
The Les Cheneaux Islands Association,
please write or call:

LCIA
1158 S. Park Ave.
Cedarville, MI 49719
(906-484-2558)

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