



A word from President Judy Colaluca...

Save the Lakes is moving forward. There are several areas we are presently addressing. For example we have offered two Healthy Landscape and Weed Recognition Workshops and we will be offering a third November 4, 2010 at the Coventry RI Senior Center. Go to our web site for more detail.

**Get involved. Contact us. Help us preserve our fresh water bodies for future generations**

Check out our website, [www.stlri.org](http://www.stlri.org), for more information.

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# SAVE THE LAKES

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2010



WHAT IS SAVE THE LAKES?

**SAVE THE LAKES** is an alliance of individuals and associations dedicated to improving, protecting, and preserving the fresh water bodies of Rhode Island for future generations

## Leaf Management

The brilliant orange, red and mustard colors dazzled us for a few brief weeks, and now we face a daunting task: raking up all those leaves that cover the lawn! October in Rhode Island is usually a month in which you can still enjoy the outdoors without bundling up too much, so it's a perfect time to get those leaves off the ground! Just be mindful where you rake them! It can be tempting to rake leaves to the street, assuming that they will wash away. The bad news is that storm drains provide no filters and no treatment, so those leaves either wash directly into local waters or wind up clogging the storm drain system, causing nuisance flooding. **Although leaves seem natural enough, large quantities don't belong in our rivers and streams.**

**So, when you're raking this fall, please keep in mind:**

You can bag your leaves for town recycling or create a compost pile on your property (but not in a wetland area).

Never rake leaves or any lawn debris toward a stream, lake or pond. Leaves add nutrients and litter fills in the lake.

## Lake Management Plan

Samples of lake management plans are available to interested parties on our website [www.stlri.org](http://www.stlri.org). These are plans that have been developed for Bowdish Lake and Smith and Sayles Reservoir.

## Pet Management

### Pick up after your pets

Dog waste and feces from other warm-blooded animals pollute local waterways and are larger polluters than you may think. Animal waste contains both nutrients and pathogens. When animal waste decomposes, the nutrients provide too much food for aquatic plants. The consequence is excessive growth of algae and weeds. If you have ever seen a lake or pond covered with green slime, then you've seen this in action. Animal waste also contains pathogens, disease causing bacteria and viruses that can make local waters unswimmable and unfishable, and have caused severe illness in humans. This type of pollution contributes to the closing of beaches and shellfish beds all over the state. The solution is very simple. Just keep a plastic bag with you on every walk with your dog. Then you will have the equipment necessary to remove your dog's waste. Pick up your pet's waste and deposit it in a trash can. **REMINDER:** Do not feed the waterfowl, their feces seriously affects water quality.

**CYANOBACTERIA** aka **BLUE GREEN ALGAE** Cyanobacteria can pose problems for humans and animals by blooming in both salt water and fresh water. It is made worse by nutrient pollution. Their blooms often have a distinct unpleasant odor, a yellow or green discoloration of water and may be toxic. They have been known to travel by way of rivers from one waterbody to another. These toxins caused approximately 50 recorded deaths worldwide. Keep waste & fertilizers out of the lake.

## Inspect Septic Systems

Approximately 1/3 of the state uses some sort of septic system for sewage disposal. Failing septic systems or cesspools are a major source of pollution to ground water and local lakes & ponds. What you flush directly affects the water we drink and the waters where we fish, swim and boat. If you have a septic system, inspect it annually, pump and repair it as needed. Pumping every 3-5 years is recommended for a three bedroom house with a 1000 gallon tank. If you have a cesspool, replace it. Do not divert storm drains or basement pumps into septic systems. Sump pump discharges should be directed into grass and gravel to naturally filter into the ground. Avoid or reduce the use of your garbage disposal...it contributes unnecessary solids to your septic system and can increase the frequency of necessary pumping. Don't use toilets as trash cans! Excess solids may clog your drain field and require more frequent pumping. For more information on maintaining a healthy septic system the Septic System Checkup Handbook is available online at [www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/](http://www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/)

**DRAWDOWN** Lowering the water level of the lake or pond can have a dramatic impact on some aquatic weed problems. It can be used where there is a dam or gate that allows a drop in the water level for extended periods of time. Lowering the water level in the winter exposes sediment to both freezing and loss of water. Freezing can have a dramatic effect on aquatic plants (such as Eurasian Milfoil or Brazilian Elodea) that have no overwintering structures such as viable seeds, turions, tubers, or winter buds. Prolonged exposure to freezing is often fatal. Know what species you want to control before selecting drawdown as a method if allowed by local or state regulations.