



# Sunset Lake Guide to Lakeside Living

Visit [www.slahampstead.org](http://www.slahampstead.org) for more information

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## Why should you be concerned about the health of Sunset Lake?

Simply put, if you appreciate the value of your property and its surroundings, you need to care about and be active in maintaining the health and water quality of Sunset Lake.

Poor water clarity and pollution combined with increased weeds and exotic plants have a direct impact on your waterfront property value.

### “Around the Lake” Guidelines

#### Please:

DO NOT dump leaves or grass clippings in or around the lake.

This contributes to poor water quality and aquatic plant growth.

DO Take care when using and storing pesticides, toxic substances, and fuels. It only takes a small amount to pollute the water.

#### **DO Maintain septic systems**

Faulty septic systems are a big concern as they can be a primary source of water pollution around our lake. Septic systems are loaded with nutrients and can also be a health threat when not functioning properly. Inspect your system on a timely basis and pump out the septic tank every three to five years depending on tank capacity and household water use.

### “In the Lake” Guidelines

#### Please:

DO NOT feed the ducks or geese. They can contribute to localized water quality issues and cause “swimmers itch”.

DO NOT bathe, wash animals, use soap of any kind, or relieve yourself in the lake.

DO NOT dump leaves or grass clippings in or around the lake.

DO NOT Throw cigarette butts, empty cans, or trash of any kind in the lake.

DO NOT spill gas in or near the lake.

## Lakeside Landscaping Guidelines

### **Limit fertilizer applications:**

Fertilizers entering the lake can stimulate aquatic plant and algal growth which diminishes water transparency. Use low maintenance grasses such as fescues that require less nutrients and water to grow. Do not apply any fertilizers until you have had your soils tested. Oftentimes a simple pH adjustment will do more good and release nutrients already in the soils. After a lawn is established a single application of fertilizer in the late fall is generally more than adequate to maintain a healthy growth from year to year.

### **Encourage shoreside vegetation and protect wetlands:**

Shoreside and wetlands provide a protective buffer that “traps” pollutants before reaching the lake removing materials both chemically and physically.

### **Limit the loss of vegetative cover and the creation of impervious surfaces:**

A forested watershed offers the best protection against pollutant runoff. Trees and tall vegetation intercept heavy rains that can erode soils and surface materials. The roots of these plants keep the soils in place, process nutrients and absorb moisture so the soils do not wash out. Impervious surfaces (paved roads, parking lots, building roofs, etc.) reduce the water’s capacity to infiltrate into the ground, and in turn, limit the effectiveness of nature’s water purification system, our soils. As water seeps into the soil, pollutants are removed from the runoff through absorption onto soil particles. Biological processes of soil organisms and plants detoxify substances and/or immobilize substances. Surface water runoff over impervious surfaces also increases water velocities which favor the transport of a greater load of suspended and dissolved pollutants into your lake.

### **Go with the Flow:**

Try to landscape and re-develop with consideration of how water flows on and off your property. Divert runoff from driveways, roofs, and gutters to a level vegetated area or a rain garden so the water can be slowed, filtered, and hopefully absorbed as recharge for your well.

### **Stabilize access areas and beaches:**

Perched beaches (cribbed areas) that keep sand and rocks in-place are preferred if you have to have that type of access. Do not create or enhance beach areas with sand (contains phosphorus, smothers aquatic habitat, fills in the lake as it gets transported away by currents and wind, and encourages invasive plants and algal blooms), particularly if the sand disappears with time.

### **Review the Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act (SWQPA):**

The SWQPA sets legal regulations aimed at protecting water quality. Permits are required for most excavation, fill, or construction activities within 250 ft of the Sunset Lake shoreline including building and maintaining docks, retaining walls, beaches, and structures.

### **Additional resources:**

[New Hampshire's Turf Fertilizer Law - What You Should Know](#)

[Landscaping at the Water's Edge](#)

[New Hampshire Homeowner’s Guide to Stormwater Management](#)

[SWQPA website at des.nh.gov](#)