

Surprise Lake Matters

Water Quality Information for Surprise Lake Residents

March 2014

Volunteer Lake Monitoring

May 2014 is the start of the fourth year of volunteer lake monitoring on Surprise Lake. The goals of this program are to involve Surprise Lake homeowners in monitoring, recording, and reporting on lake conditions; promote public awareness of lake processes and how our daily activities affect lake water quality; and to provide water quality data that will increase our understanding of the lake and provide a basis for management decisions. Volunteers record environmental conditions, measure temperature and dissolved oxygen, and collect water samples on a monthly basis from May through October. The re-



Volunteers Monitor Surprise Lake

quirements for becoming a volunteer lake monitor are: access to a boat with an anchor, 1-2 hours a month, and a desire to learn more about your lake. We provide training and equipment. If interested, contact Isabel Ragland at 253-845-9770x103 or isabelr@piercecountycd.org to schedule a training.

Stormwater Pollution Prevention for Lakes

One of the main sources of pollution to lakes is stormwater runoff. Stormwater is rain or snow melt that runs off surfaces such as roads, parking areas, rooftops and landscaped areas. As water runs off these surfaces, it can pick up pollution such as oil, fertilizer, pesticides, soil, trash, and pet waste. This pollution washes into Surprise Lake through stormwater drainage pipes and surface flow across landscaped areas.



Drainage Pipe

While small amounts of pollutants may appear insignificant, collectively they can contribute to an unwanted growth of aquatic plants, algae blooms, and bacterial contamination in the lake. The following actions will help to protect the lake from pollution:



Rain Garden

- Provide a buffer of natural vegetation along the lake shore to help filter runoff;
- Investigate natural yard care practices;
- Pick up pet waste, bag it, and put it in the trash;
- Plant a rain garden;
- Report dumping and spills to storm drains to the Milton Public Works Department at 253-922-8738.

Resources for protecting Surprise Lake:

The Washington Lake Book:

www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/plants/lakes/bookcontents.html

Blueprint for a Lake Friendly Landscape:

www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/plants/lakes/landscaping.html

Natural Yard Care:

www.tpchd.org/environment/healthy-environment/natural-yard-care/



City of Milton
Public Works
1000 Laurel Street
Milton, WA 98354
253-922-8738



Pierce Conservation District

Nuisance Waterfowl

Geese and other waterfowl love to feed on the succulent grasses of well kept lawns. Although most people enjoy seeing the birds and feeding ducks is a favorite family activity, waterfowl can become a year-round nuisance for lakeside residents.

The problem with Canada Geese

Resident Canada geese are big birds and defecate copiously. They denude grassy landscaped areas located near water bodies, and trample vegetation by frequently entering and exiting the water. Their droppings can contribute to bacteria and algae problems in lakes and ponds.



How to discourage the geese

Geese prefer to rest and feed on open lawn areas that allow them easy access to the water and clear sight lines to spot approaching predators. Maintaining a buffer of unmowed grass or other vegetation along the shore is one way to discourage these birds. Geese prefer not to walk through tall grass and this vegetative buffer has the additional water quality advantage of filtering runoff before it enters the lake. Planting wildflowers or native vegetation to help break up the expanse of lawn will help to deter geese. An open sight line (the distance from the geese to a place where a predator could hide) of less than 30 feet will generally cause geese to move to a more comfortable grazing area.

More ideas for discouraging Canada geese are available at the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife website at:

http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/canada_geese.html

Shoreline Management Plan

In 2012, the City of Milton adopted the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) as required by the State Department of Ecology. The SMP is based on the overarching concept that water is a resource owned by the citizens of the state and should be managed as such. The three broad policies of the Shoreline Master Program are to encourage water-dependant uses, protect natural shoreline resources, and promote public access. Since the adoption of the SMP, the City has issued three statements of exemption for minor work, required the restoration of removed vegetation, and has relied on the SMP policies in the review of storm water plans that discharge to Surprise Lake.

For more information about the City of Milton Shoreline Master Program, contact Chris Larson, Associate Planner, at 253-517-2715 or clarson@cityofmilton.net.

Aquatic Plants

There are two types of aquatic plants: beneficial and noxious. Beneficial plants, including native plants, play a significant role in lakes and streams by providing food and habitat for fish and wildlife, stabilizing shorelines, and contributing to nutrient cycling. Sometimes beneficial plants can grow in overabundance. This is usually the result of excessive inputs of nutrients, such as nitrogen or phosphorus from fertilizer. In contrast, aquatic noxious weeds are invasive non-native plants that threaten our native vegetation, fish, wildlife and their habitat.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has created a pamphlet titled "Aquatic Plants and Fish".

This pamphlet addresses the problems associated with aquatic noxious weeds. The pamphlet is available at http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/aquatic_plant_removal

The Department of Ecology has a webpage on freshwater aquatic plant identification: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/plants/plantid/index.html>



What Kind of Frog is That?

If you see a frog or salamander using the lake and want to know what kind it is, check out the Amphibians of Washington webpage at the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture:

<http://www.burkemuseum.org/herpetology/amphibians>

Only Rain Down the Drain

Report Pollution and Spills

City of Milton

Public Works

253-922-8738

