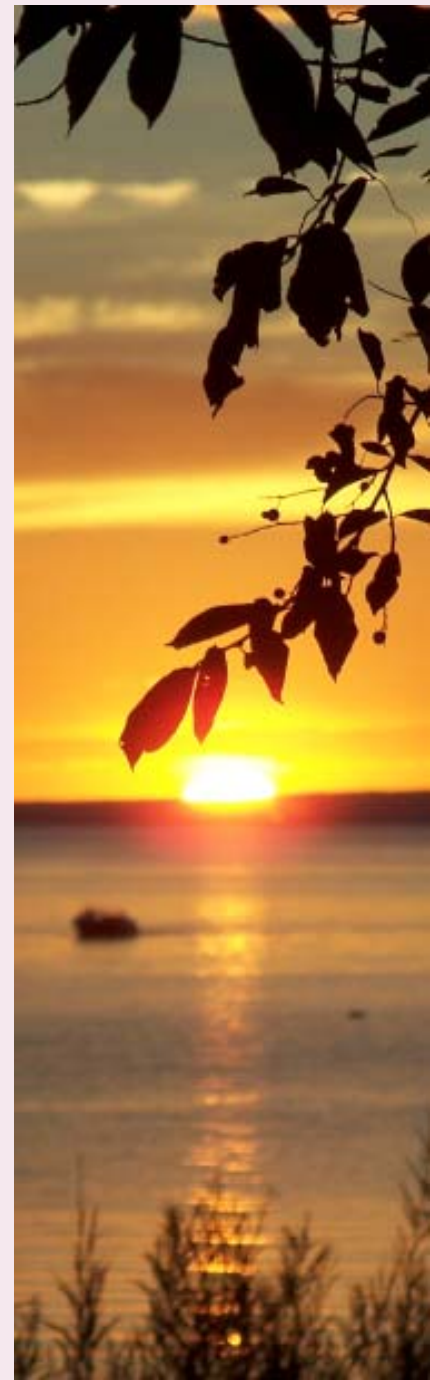


THE LIVING BY WATER PROJECT

Working towards healthier human and wildlife
habitat along the shorelines of Canada

Laura Edwards BSc. (Hons.)
Program Coordinator
The Living by Water Project



THE LIVING BY WATER PROJECT

- Living by Water has been operating in Alberta for 11 years
 - Began in BC as a coastal initiative
- Main goal is to help waterfront residents employ environmentally friendly practices on their properties.
- Importance of *cumulative effects* within lake-front communities



THE HOMESITE CONSULTATION PROGRAM



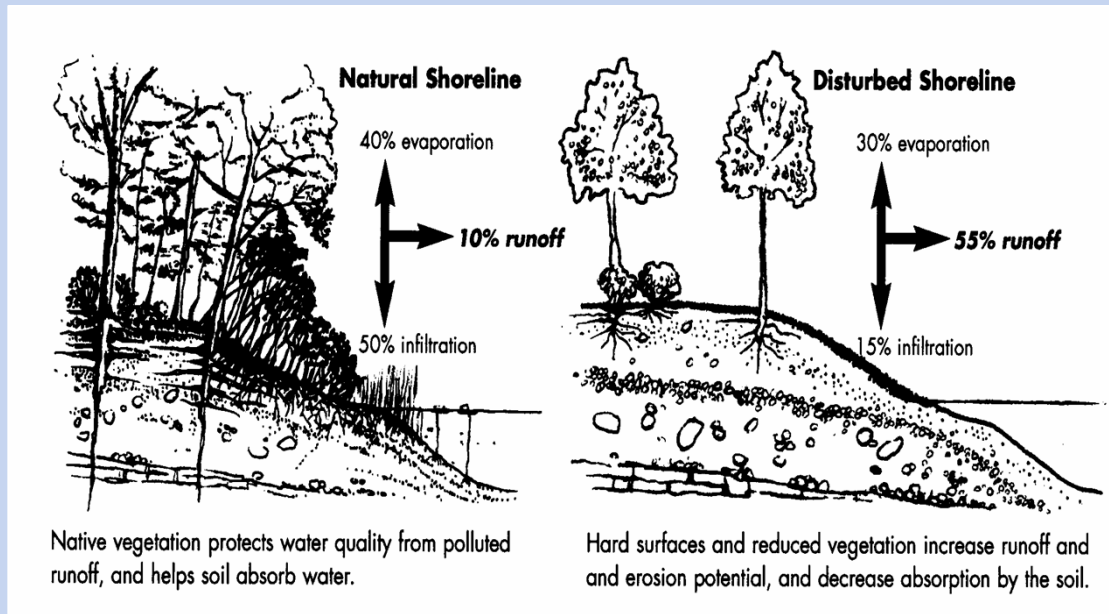
- Work with residents to discuss how their activities effect lake health.
- We have completed 656 consultations at 27 lakes in AB
 - Highest participatory lakes include Pigeon Lake and Sylvan Lake
- Doubled the program size in the past two years as we have gained momentum in the province; number of consultations doubled from 2011-2012 and we maintained similar numbers in 2013.

THE HOMESITE CONSULTATION PROGRAM

- **Trained Shoreline Advisors**
 - Students studying Biology, Ecology, or Environmental Studies
- **Address 5 aspects of shoreline living:**
 - 1.** Buffer zone
 - 2.** Built Structures
 - 3.** Yard
 - 4.** House
 - 5.** Boating
- **Give recommendations customized to the residents' property**
- **Confidential and free!**



BUFFER ZONE



- Native Vegetation root systems = filtration system
- Erosion prevention (natural vs. landscaped)
- Habitat and Wildlife
- Most noticeable affect on water quality and habitat

BUILT STRUCTURES

- Attention to the chemicals present in materials used in built structures.
- What are the impact of hardened structures along the shoreline?



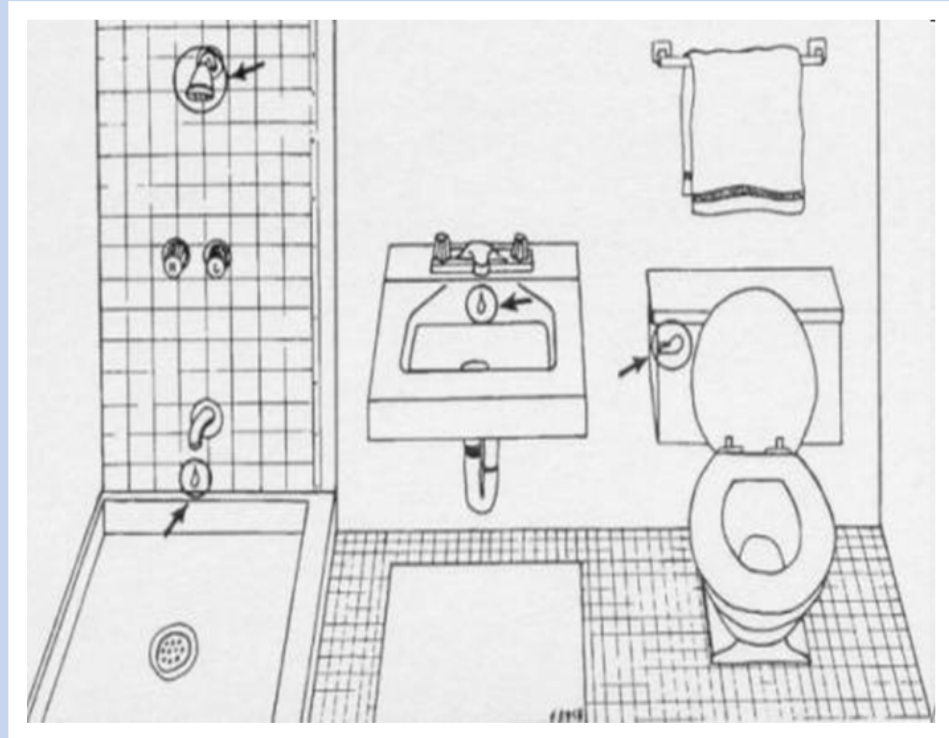
YARD



- Shoreline Access
- **LAWN**
- What is the main function of the yard????
 - Recreation
 - Pleasure
 - Exploring
 - Aesthetics
- Fertilizers and Pesticides

HOUSE

- Activities in the home do impact the lake.
 - Phosphates.
 - Septic System.
 - Water conservation.



BOATING



- Chemical spillage
- Wakes disturb waterfowl habitat and may cause erosion
- Spread of Invasive Species

COMMON RECOMMENDATIONS

■ Fertilizers

- Phosphorous is the main cause of harmful algal blooms

■ Soaps

- Phosphates and other harmful chemicals can eventually reach the lake.

■ Lawn

- Can't control erosion or runoff.
- Encourage residents to naturalize property.

■ Invasive Plants

- Invasive plants wipe out biodiversity and create poor wildlife habitat.



FEEDBACK FROM RESIDENTS

- All residents stated that they felt very comfortable having the Shoreline Advisor on their property.
- Residents rated the consultation as being highly helpful and many felt that their concerns were addressed and left with feasible ideas on how to make their properties more lake friendly.
- Overall residents reported finding the consultations very helpful and would recommend them to their friends, family, and neighbours.

2 YEAR FOLLOW-UPS

- Living by Water visits residents again 2 years down the road!
 - What changes were implemented?
 - Did they find the program useful?
 - What were the limitations?
- 88 follows ups performed since 2007.
 - 15.5% of all residents.
- Majority of residents implemented at least once suggestion.
- Majority of residents had a continued interest in making positive changes into the future.
 - Especially keen residents became involved with their local watershed group.
 - Word of mouth to friend and family to get involved in the Living by Water Project through a homesite consultation.

FOLLOW-UPS: BUFFER ZONE

- 48% of residents expanded their buffer zone and made efforts towards shoreline restoration.
 - Planted more vegetation.
 - Allowed hardened structures to soften.



FOLLOW-UPS: YARD

- 40% of residents stopped using fertilizers and 37% of residents stopped using pesticides.
- 29% of residents allowed lawn space to become more naturalized.
- Residents are in love with their lawns. Need for a greater push in understanding the negative impact of lawn, pesticides, and fertilizers on the health of the lake.

FOLLOW-UPS: HOUSE

- 80% of residents stopped using household products that contained phosphates.
- 60% of residents stopped using harsh chemical cleaning products.
- Residents receptive to the idea of changing products that they use in the house.

FOLLOW-UPS: SUCCESSES

- Residents make changes.
- Residents reported being more aware of their actions even when they don't follow through on all suggestions.
- Many residents shared this information with other people and some make attempts to get other involved.
- Involvement with local watershed group.

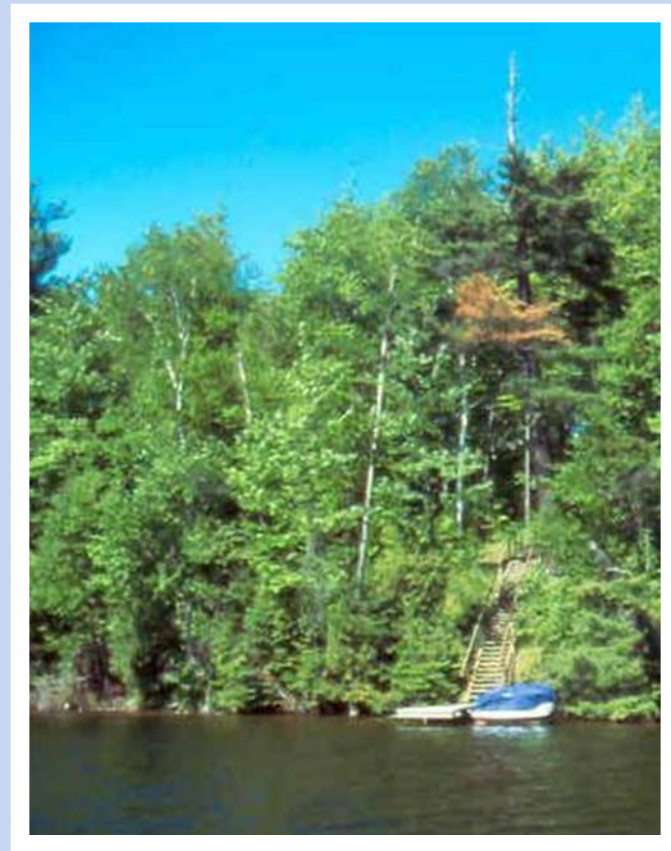
FOLLOW-UPS: CHALLENGES

- It is difficult to get residents to commit to a follow up after two years.
 - Want to increase the number of residents receiving a follow up to 50%.
- Some messages are not getting through: people are in love with their lawns.



CONCLUSION

- Valuable service for lakeshore residents.
- Measurable behavioural changes
- Challenges:
 - Getting people to sign up- word of mouth and lake volunteers are very important!
 - Difficult to get residents to follow through with a follow up consultation.



QUESTIONS?



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- Grateful for financial support from:

