



Lake Organization Invitation Package

October 16, 2017

Dear Kennebec Lake Association,

Watersheds Canada has been working with the Canadian Wildlife Federation to deliver the Love Your Lake program to lakes within the Eastern Ontario region. This is Canada's most comprehensive shoreline evaluation and education tool available and we would like to invite your lake to participate! To date, over 34,000 shoreline properties on 140 lakes have been assessed in many Canadian provinces using the standardized Love Your Lake Shoreline Assessment Protocol and Datasheet.

Love Your Lake Program Description

Love Your Lake is a packaged shoreline assessment and educational stewardship program that can be transferred to any shoreline community across the country. This program is developed by Watersheds Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF) to be delivered by existing environmental organizations in regions across Canada.

Locally driven by Regional Partners, lake associations or lake stewardship organizations are invited to volunteer their lake as participants in the program. Lakes participating in the Love Your Lake program will have their shorelines assessed from a boat on a property-by-property basis by trained staff using a standardized Shoreline Assessment Protocol and datasheet.

During the assessments, trained staff look for shoreline features such as: vegetation, development (decks, docks, boat houses, and more), retaining walls and wildlife habitat. Restoration opportunities and shoreline improvement recommendations are also recorded.

After each shoreline property on a lake is assessed, Regional Partner program staff enter the data into a secure online database which generates individualized property reports. Each report consists of information on the state of the property's shoreline and provides suggested voluntary actions for shoreline improvements and property maintenance that will benefit the health of the lake ecosystem.

When the Regional Partner has finalized the data entry for an entire lake, each shoreline property owner will receive a letter with a unique survey code applicable to only their property. Due to the work involved in preparing the property reports, the survey code letters and property reports are typically ready the following spring.

Each shoreline property owner can order their individualized property report online by entering the unique survey code on their letter at MyReport.LoveYourLake.ca. Shoreline property owners will have the opportunity to order their report as either a free electronic PDF to be emailed to them or a bound hardcopy to be mailed to them for \$20.00 including taxes and shipping.

Additional to the individualized shoreline property reports, the Love Your Lake program provides each Lake Organization with a valuable lake summary report. This report summarizes the data collected along the entire lakeshore and encourages stewardship action at the community level.

The simple but effective suggested actions discussed in both the individualized property reports and the lake summary report will help protect and enhance shoreline and lake health for both people and wildlife!

Benefits of the Love Your Lake Program

The Love Your Lake program is designed to support and encourage lake-wide communities to protect and enhance their shorelines and ultimately lake health. The program includes reliable, standardized and peer-reviewed resources and training specifically designed to help local lake organizations engage their shoreline property owners in shoreline stewardship and restoration activities.

Benefits of the Love Your Lake program for Lake Organizations include:

- The ability to enhance the program with local information and resources;
- Standardized evaluations of every shoreline property on the lake(s);
- Consistent stewardship information and recommended actions delivered directly to shoreline property owners to encourage long-term actions; and,
- A summary report, useful to help determine shoreline improvements or changes over time and guide community stewardship efforts.

As a result of lake-wide participation, every shoreline property owner on the lake will receive access to their individualized shoreline property report, which is:

- An educational tool for shoreline property owners containing information on the state of their unique shoreline, recommended voluntary actions for improvements and resources for further information;
- Unique to each property: each report contains content specific to its observed features; and,
- A visually appealing document designed to be kept with the property (shoreline property owner names are not included in the reports).

Participating lake organizations will also receive:

- Introductory letters to all shoreline property owners along the lake and a values survey (if applicable) to better understand their perceptions and values of their lake;
- Trained staff of Watersheds Canada to perform shoreline assessments from a boat, with no inconvenience to shoreline property owners (we don't access their properties); and,
- Pre-written, customizable communications materials (emails, newsletter articles, website articles, web images and social media posts) for your use.

The Importance of Healthy Shorelines and Healthy Lakes

Shorelines are unique and sensitive areas that warrant special attention. Due to their ecological, aesthetic and recreational value, protecting waterfront properties benefits people, wildlife and the lake ecosystem. A healthy, natural shoreline has important biological functions, including:

- Acting as a filter, reducing the amount of pollutants that enter the lake;
- Stabilizing soils and protecting against erosion; and,
- Providing vital habitat for fish and wildlife.

Shorelines are among the most productive environments on earth. The shallow water and first 10-15 metres (30-50 feet) of shore around lakes and rivers provide food and habitat essential to the survival of many species. Plants, microorganisms, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals and fish depend on healthy shorelines for survival.

Keeping shorelines healthy and natural is also the easiest way to protect water quality and the value of waterfront properties. By filtering nutrients and reducing erosion, the quality of lake water can improve over time, providing cleaner, clearer water for recreational activities like swimming and boating.

Love Your Lake Program History

The Love Your Lake program has been developed by Watersheds Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF).

The Love Your Lake program is a modified and updated version of a scientific protocol developed by MAPLE (Mutual Association for the Protection of Lake Environments) in the 1980s. Watersheds Canada and other organizations in Eastern Ontario had been using a modified shoreline assessment protocol for over ten years and in 2012 Watersheds Canada partnered with CWF to officially brand and broaden the program into the Love Your Lake program today!

Working Together for Healthy Shorelines and Healthy Lakes

The success of the Love Your Lake program relies upon participating donors, funders, organizations and individuals at various levels of involvement. Donors and funders support Watersheds Canada and CWF to lead the development of the program materials and training to Regional Partners, who lead the facilitation and delivery of the program to lake organizations and shoreline property owners. By working cooperatively and maintaining strong relationships and lines of communication throughout the various levels of involvement, the Love Your Lake program is successfully working towards improving the health of shorelines across multiple regions.

Watersheds Canada and CWF

As the lead partners and program administrators, Watersheds Canada and CWF work cooperatively with Regional Partners, donors and contractors to develop and deliver the Love Your Lake program across many regions in Canada. Watersheds Canada and CWF are responsible to:

- Provide training, materials and support to regional partners;
- Provide required policies, procedures and agreements for use by Regional Partners and Lake Organizations;

- Develop the educational and stewardship content for the individual property reports, summary reports, website and communications materials;
- Develop the program components and resources, including the database and training materials;
- Facilitate the printing of communications materials and survey code letters for individual property reports;
- Respond to all inquiries and concerns of Regional Partners;
- Prepare and distribute lake summary reports; and
- Continually improve the efficacy of the program across all participating regions.

Main Contacts



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Regional Partners

As the Regional Partner in the Eastern Ontario region, Watersheds Canada works with CWF to lead the delivery of the Love Your Lake program to lakes within our geographic areas. We have organizational capacity, local knowledge and expertise to form successful relationships with lake organizations such as yours to deliver the program positively and effectively. Regional Partners are responsible to:

- Facilitate the delivery of the program to one or more lakes within their region by working with Watersheds Canada, CWF and local lake organizations;
- Form relationships and agreements with lake organizations to deliver the Love Your Lake program;
- Sign and use required policies, procedures and agreements with Watersheds Canada, CWF and lake organizations;
- Hire and/or supervise staff to:
 - Attend training by Watersheds Canada and CWF;
 - Communicate with lake associations;
 - Complete all in-field surveying and data entry of properties;
 - Facilitate the distribution of communications materials to lake organizations and/or shoreline property owners;
 - Promote the program locally (at events and/or annual general meetings) and answer questions from lake organizations and/or shoreline property owners within the region;
 - Obtain electronic parcel mapping files from local townships or municipalities to identify individual properties along each lake using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) computer technology; obtain shoreline property addresses and mailing addresses for each property;
 - Work cooperatively with lake organizations to troubleshoot any in-field data collection errors or data-entry errors that result in incorrect individual property reports;

- Report on lessons learned, submit feedback and collect and submit testimonials; and,
- Provide activity updates, photos and stories to Watersheds Canada and CWF.

Lake Organizations

Lake organizations (lake associations or similar groups) will work with Regional Partners to help deliver the Love Your Lake program information to shoreline property owners. Lake organizations are responsible to:

- Work with regional partners to deliver communications materials to shoreline property owners;
- Provide volunteer assistance to Regional Partner staff to complete surveys, including delivery of communications materials to shoreline property owners;
- Sign and use required policies, procedures and agreements with Regional Partners;
- Provide volunteer boat drivers, boats, and/or motor fuel to regional partner staff to complete in-field surveys; and,
- Encourage shoreline property owner action to naturalize their shoreline properties or take other actions to improve their shoreline properties as recommended in the individualized property reports.

Shoreline Property Owners

Shoreline property owners are the end-users of this program. When lake organizations agree to participate in the Love Your Lake program, each property along the lake will be surveyed. Each shoreline property owner will receive an introductory letter (informing them about the program and that the lake organization and Regional Partner will be delivering the program to the lake), and a values survey with a return envelope, if applicable. The spring following their assessments, shoreline property owners will receive a letter in the mail with a unique survey code to order their report online. Each shoreline property owner will have the opportunity to voluntarily participate more actively in the Love Your Lake program by:

- Completing the values survey online or mail the provided hardcopy to CWF using the return envelope;
- Attending local events and/or meetings organized or supported by their lake organization or Regional Partner organization;
- Ordering their individual shoreline property report online (MyReport.LoveYourLake.ca) using the unique survey code delivered to them in a letter (these reports can be ordered as a free online PDF or a bound hardcopy mailed to them for \$20.00 which includes taxes and shipping);
- Completing the Evaluation Survey found online (LoveYourLake.ca); and,
- Following through on the recommended actions in their individual property reports to increase the natural state of their shoreline property.

Next Steps

For more details, please take a look at the attached documents, including the Frequently Asked Questions by Shoreline Property Owners, the Love Your Lake Shoreline Assessment Datasheet, and the Sample Shoreline Property Report.

We are so proud to be able to offer your lake this great program and hope to be able to work with you in the near future. We would be honoured to help you and your community continue to Love Your Lake! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us and we will be happy to provide answers to your questions as well as more information.

Sincerely,

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