



Geneva Lake
Conservancy



GENEVA LAKE ASSOCIATION



April 22, 2021

Dear Geneva Lake Property Owner:

We are writing to ask your assistance in an urgent matter regarding Geneva Lake.

As you may know, several Walworth County lakes have experienced algae (cyanobacteria) blooms in the last few years, including Geneva Lake, Delavan Lake and Lauderdale Lakes.

Algae blooms are caused by excessive nutrients, especially phosphorus, in lake water and sediments. The extreme storms of recent years have also increased phosphorus runoff in our lakes from residential, commercial and agricultural sources. Algae blooms endanger the health of aquatic life, can cause serious health problems in humans and pets, and make the lake unsafe for swimming and other recreational activities.

In addition, algae blooms can limit lake use during the summer months, as they have done on Lake Delavan, and may lower property values. **As a lake property owner, you can help to lower phosphorus levels in Geneva Lake by:**

- Preventing leaves, lawn clippings and other lawn waste, which are high in phosphorus, from entering the lake and asking your lawn service and neighbors to do so as well.
- Limiting the use of fertilizers and lawn chemicals, which may contain phosphorus, nitrogen and other chemicals that encourage algae growth. Refrain from watering your lawn after applying fertilizer.
- Having your soil tested before applying fertilizers or contracting to have fertilizers applied to your lawn. This will prevent the application of unnecessary fertilizers that will run off into the lake.
- Stopping soil erosion by planting native plants along the lakefront and streams leading to the lake, which will filter phosphorus and other pollutants before they reach the water.
- Monitoring construction sites to prevent soil and other runoff into the lake by installing silt fences and channeling runoff into areas with vegetation, not into the lake.
- Taking measures not to disturb the lake bottom as sediment contains years of phosphorus buildup.
- Avoiding washing cars, boat or pets near the lake and bathing or shampooing in the lake.

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The Geneva Lake Conservancy's Conservation@Home program is an education and recognition program for homeowners that supports water conservation and protection.

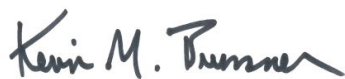
Trained volunteers will visit your property and tell you how you can improve its ecological health and protect the watershed by planting deep-rooted native wildflowers, trees and shrubs, creating rain and pollinator gardens, better managing storm water and removing invasive plant species from your property. Homeowners who meet most of the requirements for an environmentally friendly yard will be given a special sign. Site visits are free for Conservancy members and \$25 for non-members. To make an appointment, email outreach@genevalakeconservancy.org or call 262-275-5700.

In addition, watch for our "Keeping It Blue" column written by members of the Water Alliance to Preserve Geneva Lake in the *Lake Geneva Regional News* beginning in May.

The Water Alliance was formed in 2019 to coordinate the efforts of the Conservancy, Geneva Lake Environmental Agency, Geneva Lake Association, Walworth County Conservation office, Wisconsin DNR, municipalities and others in proactively addressing problems with Geneva Lake's water quality and watershed. The Water Alliance is using the expertise of these agencies and others to control invasive species and reduce phosphorus and other pollutants entering the lake.

The **Keeping It Blue** program to reduce phosphorus is funded by a grant from the Richard H. Driehaus Charitable Lead Trust, the Simms Family Foundation and Kikkoman Foods Foundation. If you know of an area where large amounts of phosphorus may be entering the lake, please report it by calling the Geneva Lake Conservancy at 262-275-5700 or the DNR Hotline at 1-800-847-9367. You can also text the DNR hotline and can choose to remain anonymous. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Kevin Brunner, Chair
Geneva Lake Conservancy



Mark Lillie, President
Geneva Lake Association



Lamar "Sparky" Lundberg, Chair
Geneva Lake Environmental Agency