

Creating healthy habitat for fish

Picture your favorite fishing hole.

Would you prefer clear blue water and fresh air or a lake covered in a thick layer of greenish-brown algae, festering under the sweltering summer sun and complete with a shimmering trail of engine oil and grease? There are a few steps residents can take at home and their yards to ensure



that local lakes provide healthy habitat for fish and enjoyable fishing opportunities for years to come.

- 1. Think like a fish.** Fish, much like people, like to have clean water to swim in. Any pollutant that lands on a sidewalk, driveway or road can eventually be washed away into a storm sewer or roadside ditch and wind up in our local lakes and rivers. Sweep up any spilled herbicide, pesticide, fertilizer or road salt from paved surfaces around your home, repair any engine leaks on your car and dispose of used engine oil properly at a drop-off facility.
- 2. Give a breath of fresh air.** When algae grows out of control on a lake due to excess phosphorus in the water, it creates a chain reaction that reduces the amount of overall oxygen in the water, resulting in fewer, smaller fish and sometimes even mass fish kills. Help reduce the amount of phosphorus that enters lakes by keeping grass clippings and other yard waste off of paved surfaces and using zero-phosphorus dishwasher detergent.
- 3. Save some shade.** Fish require shady, vegetated habitats for spawning. If you have shoreline property, leave at least half of it unmowed and under natural cover to create habitat for fish. Enjoy a view of the water without destroying its ability to support aquatic life.