

Lake Management Plan for Gould Lake

Lake Plan Introduction

There is a need to recognize waterfront areas as strong shoreline communities that are separate and distinct from Settlement and Rural areas. The quality of life in these waterfront areas is directly dependent upon protecting natural and social values that are unique to these communities.

Goals of the Lake Management Plan

1. Restore the natural shorelines and manage the ecosystem while enjoying the use of the Lake.
2. Take a proactive approach with local governments, communicating our concerns about the risks of overdevelopment. Work together to achieve these goals.
3. Discourage future overdevelopment of the Gould Lake waterfront.

Gould Lake is relatively healthy. In order to preserve this ecosystem we should:

- a. Consider size and depth of the Lake and length of the shoreline,
- b. Consider the area of natural vegetation on the shoreline that is protecting the Lake,
- c. Consider the number of cottages/residences.

This document is not intended to advance the special interests of those fortunate enough to already reside on Gould Lake. We want our lake to continue to be a place where water quality, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities are maintained for present and future generations.

The archive history of Gould Lake outlines how Gould Lake residents have been supporting healthy lake initiatives since 1971.

We vow to continue to advance plans to support healthy lake initiatives while promoting activities that support the interests of the residents and land owners adjoining Gould Lake.

We will continue to study and report on government plans affecting the residents of the uses of land in the vicinity of Gould Lake and to make representations with respect to all such matters.

Lake Management Plan for Gould Lake

We have tried to build upon these objectives and rise above our own special interests and consider the broader issues that impact the natural environment and the overall health of the local ecosystem.

The Plan includes continued Lake Stewardship providing water quality monitoring and encourages healthy lake initiatives.

Lake Planning is a process and so the production of a Lake Management Plan is only the first step in an on-going community effort to maintain and enhance the natural, social and physical environment that is the Gould Lake experience.

An archive to record the history of the lake is maintained in the Bruce County Museum & Archives for safe keeping and to add to the collective memory of the County. These records are available to the public at the museum.

The Lake Plan

This Lake Management Plan is being created to provide a legacy for future generations and enhance the spirit and quality of life for lake users.

We will work to protect the Gould Lake ecosystem and preserve its health and natural beauty and be aware of the dangers that threaten the wellbeing of the lake. Our “Guideline for a Healthy Lake” demonstrates our commitment to the Plan to earn the respect and cooperation of all Gould Lake residents and Municipal, Provincial and Federal governments.

The Plan includes a commitment by the Gould Lake residents to:

- Adhere to this Lake Management Plan.
- Preserve our history through the Gould Lake Archives.
- Provide ongoing Lake Stewardship.
- Encourage cooperative protection of the lake to stop the pollution and deterioration of the natural environment in and around Gould Lake and its vulnerable shoreline by making every effort to adhere to the following guidelines.

Lake Management Plan for Gould Lake

Guideline for a Healthy Lake

Septic systems. Leaking and overloaded septic systems are a major source of phosphorus in the lake, fuelling algae growth and causing water quality to decline. Inspect your septic bed and surrounding area periodically for odours or puddling and, if you detect trouble, have it inspected by a professional.

Tree Preservation. Trees are vitally important within our community; especially around the shoreline of the lake. Avoiding the removal of trees will:

- Maintain and improve water quality and reduce erosion
- Reduce pollution in the air
- Support our quality of life through the maintenance of our tree cover
- Preserve the natural beauty of the lake and its shorelines

Rebuild the buffer zone. Much of our waterfront has previously been stripped of the native shrubs, trees, grasses, and other plants that usually grow along an undeveloped shoreline. This buffer zone traps harmful runoff in its roots and decomposing leaves, helps to prevent erosion, and is a rich habitat for shore-dwelling species vital to a healthy aquatic ecosystem. One of the best things you can do for our lake is replant the buffer, with native species which readily absorb most surface water. You can start small with a strip, even a metre at a time, and enlarge it over a few years. Even a passive approach – stopping the lawn-cutting and letting native plants regenerate – can work wonders.

Lawns. About 50 per cent of rainfall rolls right over short manicured grass to the water, carrying with it harmful fertilizers (many are loaded with phosphorus) or pesticides (poisonous to aquatic life). Don't use chemical fertilizers or pesticides, and mow it no shorter than eight centimetres high.

Refuel away from the water. Top up gas tanks, such as chainsaws, generators, pumps, and boat engines well back from shore, preferably over a tray and in a shelter with a hard floor.

Use greener cleaners. What goes down the drain and into the septic can still make its way to the lake. Many detergents and soaps on the market contain phosphates. As well, avoid using household chemical cleaners, which destroy the beneficial bacteria that break down the waste in the holding tank. There are much less harmful alternatives now, with the proliferation of products with green certifications, and the comeback of DIY cleaners, like baking soda, vinegar, and lemon juice.

Lake Management Plan for Gould Lake

Don't soap in the lake. Even if a soap says it's phosphate-free and biodegradable, don't assume it's safe for the lake. The soap can be harmful to fish and other aquatic animals; all "biodegradable" means is that it's capable of breaking down (with the help of soil bacteria) into its constituent parts. However, do use this type of soap if bathing on land, and dump the washwater well back from the lake, so it doesn't filter down as runoff.

Waterweeds. Don't strip the entire waterfront of its aquatic vegetation, which holds sediment in place and provides critical food and shelter for many water dwellers. Instead, designate a small activity area for swimming, preferably less than two metres wide. Easier still, put a ladder at the end of your dock and skip the shallows entirely.

Be a low-polluting boater. When close to shore, always drive at a "no wake" speed (10 km/h within 30 metres of shore) to protect aquatic and shoreline nurseries from wave and prop action, and prevent erosion. Get your engine tested to ensure it meets or exceeds EPA 2007 standards. If you're in the market for a new engine, four-strokes and direct-injection two-strokes are much cleaner than old-style two-strokes.

Visiting boaters. Zebra mussels can wreak havoc when they arrive in a new lake environment, often hitchhiking on boat hulls and in bait buckets. Before launching in our lake, drain the bilge water and scrub the hull bottom to avoid transferring these alien species.

Fishing. Help maintain the fish stock in the lake by practicing catch and release. Avoid fishing in spawning and feeding areas near shoreline and docks. This practice benefits both the fish stocks and swimmers. Avoid using threatened species, such as frogs as bait and never dump unused bait minnows into the water.

Light Pollution. Floodlights and other high-wattage outdoor bulbs are not only energy eaters, they are inappropriate at the lake. They cause light pollution on our lake, confusing mating and feeding behavior of wildlife, reducing boaters' ability to see each other's navigation lights, and stealing our view of the stars. Replace them with low-voltage, low-wattage lamps, and turn them off unless you really need them. "Take Back the Night" and install lights directed downwards and deflected away from adjacent properties and from the lake itself.

Noise Pollution. Leaf blowers, power mowers, power washers, loud music, fireworks, and even motorized water craft all add to noise pollution at the lake. We have chosen to cottage or live at the lake because of the natural beauty and tranquility of Gould Lake. We all enjoy relaxing and entertaining outdoors during the nice weather. Consider your fellow cottagers and limit the use of "noise polluters".