

# Commit to the Lake Smart Pledge.

Septic systems and stormwater are the two biggest threats to our lake that we can control. To protect our gem, we need to take care of this water before it leaves our yards and enters the lake. If we work together we can make a difference

1

**Have your septic system pumped and inspected every 2-3 years.** This not only benefits the lake and public health, but it extends your system's life and helps to maintain a big financial expenditure.

2

**Make stormwater become groundwater.** Get it back into the ground. Keep the sediment and nutrients it carries from washing over your property and into the lake. Let your soil absorb and neutralize it. Plant roots and the soil microbes will filter it.

3

**Retain trees, shrubs, and flowers that are already present.** To improve your view of the lake, remove limbs, not whole trees. The original plants on your property are perhaps the best natural filtration and water absorption system available. Better than what we can pay a contractor to reconstruct!

**Keep your lawn small.** Its presence is similar to asphalt in absorbing water. The water and nutrients in stormwater are minimally absorbed or filtered by grass. These go straight to the lake when there is a lawn.

**Eliminate fertilizer application.** The University of Connecticut says most lawns don't need any! Test your soil to see if there is any need for it. [www.soiltest.uconn.edu](http://www.soiltest.uconn.edu)>sampling

**Create vegetated shoreline buffer zones to filter runoff.** 10-30 feet of native plantings help keep nutrients and pesticides from entering the lake. They also deter geese from leaving the lake to feed on your lawn.

**Move fallen leaves and grass clippings away from the lake.** Bagging and removal will reduce phosphorus and other nutrients from entering the lake (the big contributors to aquatic weed growth and algal blooms).

**Roof runoff** can be captured in rain gardens and vegetated swales where it becomes groundwater .

**Driveway runoff.** Think of driveways as being storm-time channels to the lake. Rubber razors and thank-you-mams (man-made ridges) will divert water into vegetated areas where it can be absorbed. Proper grading will accomplish the same. Permeable paver drives capture water that asphalt directs downhill.

**Patios, paths and walks** These are smaller versions of driveways. Grade them, curve them, and make them permeable.

**4**

**Think about the chemicals you use in your house and on your property.**

Consider whether you really need to use herbicides, insecticides, organic solvents, and lawn care products. Just because it disappears into the soil or down your drain doesn't guarantee it won't end up in the lake.

**Remove pet waste to the dump.**

**West Hill Lake is the cleanest, clearest lake in Connecticut, but it is under threat. I pledge to help keep our lake pristine by carrying out the Pledge's basic recommendations. I know that when a lake goes bad that it`s forever.**

**Signed**

**Address**

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The following are my future priorities for making Lake Smart improvements to my own property.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)