

WATER QUALITY OF LAKES

Pamphlet for Residents
of Val-des-Monts



**Federation of Lakes
of Val-des-Monts**

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the municipality of Val-des-Monts. The residents of the municipality pride themselves on the natural beauty of their territory – since much of this region is comprised of lakes and rivers, the preservation of this incredible resource is directly tied our future ability to enjoy that sense of pride.

The Federation of Lakes of Val-des-Monts is a voluntary group comprised of representatives from Lake Associations within the municipality of Val-des-Monts. The Federation's goal is to encourage all of the lake associations to work together in protecting the quality of the water in our lakes. Over the years, the Federation has been successful in working with the municipality toward the implementation of numerous water quality initiatives, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Program for the revitalization of the shoreline
- Publication of a semi-annual bulletin
- Water Quality Testing & Monitoring
- Septic & Graywater System Inspections
- Herbicide/Pesticide Spraying Bylaw
- Shoreline Lawn Mowing Restrictions
- Lake Capacity Model Adoption
- Annual Water Quality Day

The goal of this document is to make you aware of the challenges facing the future water quality of our lakes, and to educate all property owners on the actions they can take to assist in the fight.

CONCERNS & CONSEQUENCES

It's important to recognize that our rivers and lakes are affected by all properties within the watershed, not only those directly bordering the waterways, since all water runoff ultimately ends up in the same place. As such, these issues are equally pertinent to all property owners, anywhere within the municipality.

The major threat currently facing all lakes in the region is that of blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) which is actually a bacterial bloom that represents a serious, sometimes toxic, and aesthetic threat to our waterways. There are many unknowns surrounding the phenomenon, but a few facts are clear, as follows:

Increased phosphate levels contribute to increased nutrient availability for algal growth. Some level of phosphate infiltration occurs naturally, but a large percentage is added to the system through human activity. It should also be noted that septic systems are not designed to treat phosphates, so phosphates going into the tank will ultimately come out of it and continue flowing downhill to the lake.

Shoreline depletion contributes to increased infiltration of nutrients and other pollutants (such as phosphates) through unimpeded water runoff. Shoreline depletion includes tree removal, lawn mowing, and any other activities which destroy the natural filtration mechanism of the system. Depleted shorelines also increase the rate of erosion, which not only has the potential to alter the look of your property, but also represents another source of nutrient enrichment for the waterway.

Lawn maintenance contributes to waterway pollution through increased runoff, and increased pollutant levels within this runoff. Mowing lawns to the shore removes the natural filtration barrier around the waterway and increases the amount of runoff reaching the lake or river. Any fertilizers, herbicides, and/or pesticides added to your lawn or garden will ultimately be washed to the waterway in this runoff. Irrigation systems compound the problem by increasing the amount of water running to the lake or river, carrying these pollutants with it.

Remember that water runs downhill, so all waterways are affected by what's upstream, and they consequently have an impact on anything that's downstream. This means that we all share the responsibility for maintaining the quality of our precious lakes and rivers.

All lakes age naturally and suffer consequences as a result. However, the rate of aging has the potential to be drastically increased through human activity and pollution. It's up to each of us to do what we can to reduce our impact!



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

As a property owner in Val-des-Monts, you share the responsibility for maintaining our lakes and rivers. The following list represents a few major items you should understand and respect.

Shoreline Preservation/Regeneration – there are bylaws in place to enforce the preservation of our shorelines. You are required to maintain a natural shoreline within the first 15 meters of the water's edge, with no more than a 5 meter wide access to the lake. This natural barrier provides protection from erosion and helps to absorb and filter impurities from the surface water running into the lake. In the event that your property does not conform to these regulations, a regeneration program is highly recommended. More details are available on the Federation's website.

The Federation of Lakes of Val-des-Monts wishes to thank the Municipality of Val-des-Monts for the production of this pamphlet.

Lawn Reduction – when it comes to lakes and rivers, no lawn is a good lawn. As such, shoreline property owners are encouraged to reduce the size of their lawns, and to eliminate the usage of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides. The municipality has implemented a bylaw banning the use of herbicides and pesticides, and the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais adopted a by-law which restricts the mowing of lawns at the shoreline.

Septic System Maintenance – the municipality undertakes a limited number of septic system inspections each year, but it's ultimately up to you to ensure that your system complies with regulations. In the case of a municipal inspection which reveals problems, the municipality has the power to force compliance. For cottages, the septic system should be pumped every 4 years, and for a house, it should be pumped every 2 years.

Eco-Friendly Products – many cleaning agents contain high levels of phosphates, which ultimately end up running off to our waterways, and which subsequently provide nutrients to support algae growth. Remember that septic systems do not treat phosphates. Therefore, the only option for limiting their entry into the lake is to refrain from using products which contain phosphates. Please visit the Federation's website for more details on the eco-friendly alternatives which are available.

Irrigation Systems – increasing the amount of water on your lawn increases the amount of water running to the lake or river. This increased runoff carries more nutrients and pollutants to the waterway. Reducing or eliminating the usage of these systems is a great idea!

CONCLUSION

The future health of our lakes and rivers is a responsibility shared by all property owners within the municipality, and as such, it's up to each of us to do our part to reduce our negative environmental impacts. From septic and graywater system maintenance to shoreline preservation, from laundry detergent choices to fertilizer usage – you have the power to make a difference, and it's up to you to make sure you do!

The natural beauty of Val-des-Monts is something we all enjoy, and the Federation of Lakes encourages you to do your part to preserve it for generations to come.

RESOURCES

For more details on anything presented in this document or to obtain a digital copy, please visit the Federation of Lakes website at www.federationdeslacs.ca.

If you have questions, concerns, or comments related to water quality in Val-des-Monts, please contact any member of the executive team, whose details are listed on the website at www.federationdeslacs.ca/contact.htm, or send an email to federationlacsavdm@gmail.com.

For further reading on related subjects:

- www.federationdeslacs.ca/environ.htm
- www.val-des-monts.net
- www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/ministere/inter_en.htm

Eskalad.ca

CONCLUSION

La santé des lacs et des rivières est une responsabilité commune à tous les propriétaires dans la municipalité et, en tant que telle, il appartient à chacun d'entre nous de prendre des mesures individuelles pour réduire notre empreinte environnementale nuisible. Du maintien des installations sanitaires (fosse septique et évacuation d'eaux usées) à la préservation des rives, du choix de détergent à l'usage d'engrais, vous pouvez faire quelque chose de concret, de positif, de salutaire !

La beauté naturelle de Val-des-Monts est un bien commun, précieux, et la Fédération des lacs vous encourage à faire votre part pour la préserver au profit des générations à venir.

RESSOURCES COMPLÉMENTAIRES

Pour en savoir plus sur tout sujet abordé ici ou obtenir une version électronique de cette brochure, veuillez visiter le site Web de la Fédération des lacs à l'adresse www.federationdeslacs.ca.
Si vous avez des questions, préoccupations ou observations concernant la qualité de l'eau à Val-des-Monts, veuillez contacter un des membres de l'équipe dirigeante (voir coordonnées sur www.federationdeslacs.ca/contact-fr.htm) ou écrivez-nous à l'adresse federationlacsavdm@gmail.com.

- Sujets et lectures connexes :
- www.federationdeslacs.ca/environ-fr.htm
 - www.val-des-monts.net
 - www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/ministere/inter.htm