

Plant to Protect: Vegetation & Water Quality

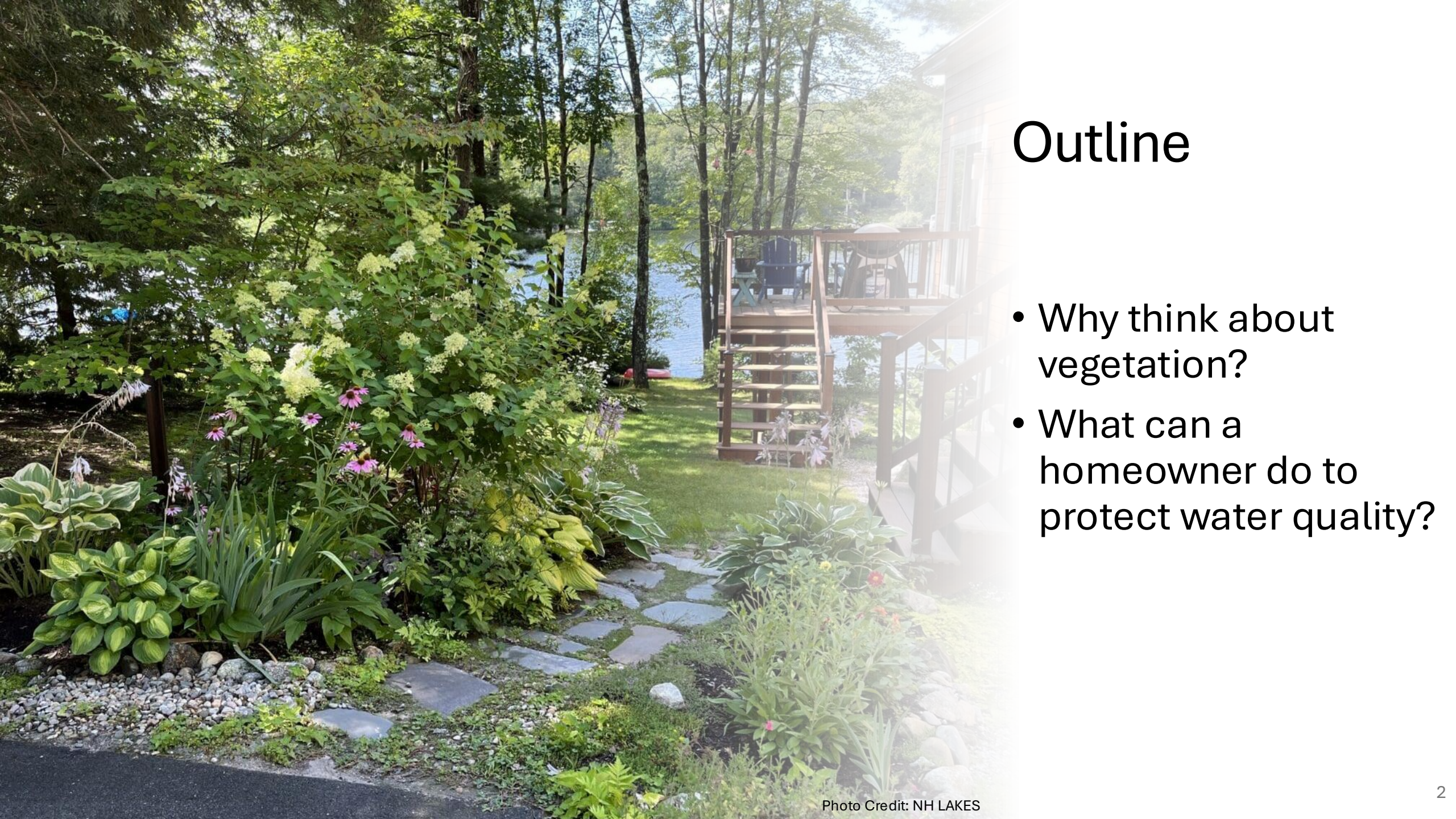
July 11, 2026

Little Lake Sunapee
Protective Association



Photo by Midge Eliassen

Photo Credit: Midge Eliassen



Outline

- Why think about vegetation?
- What can a homeowner do to protect water quality?

We love Little Lake Sunapee!



Photo Credit: Loon Preservation Committee



Photo Credit: Midge Eliassen



Photo Credit: Nancy Heckel



Photo Credit: New Hampshire State Parks

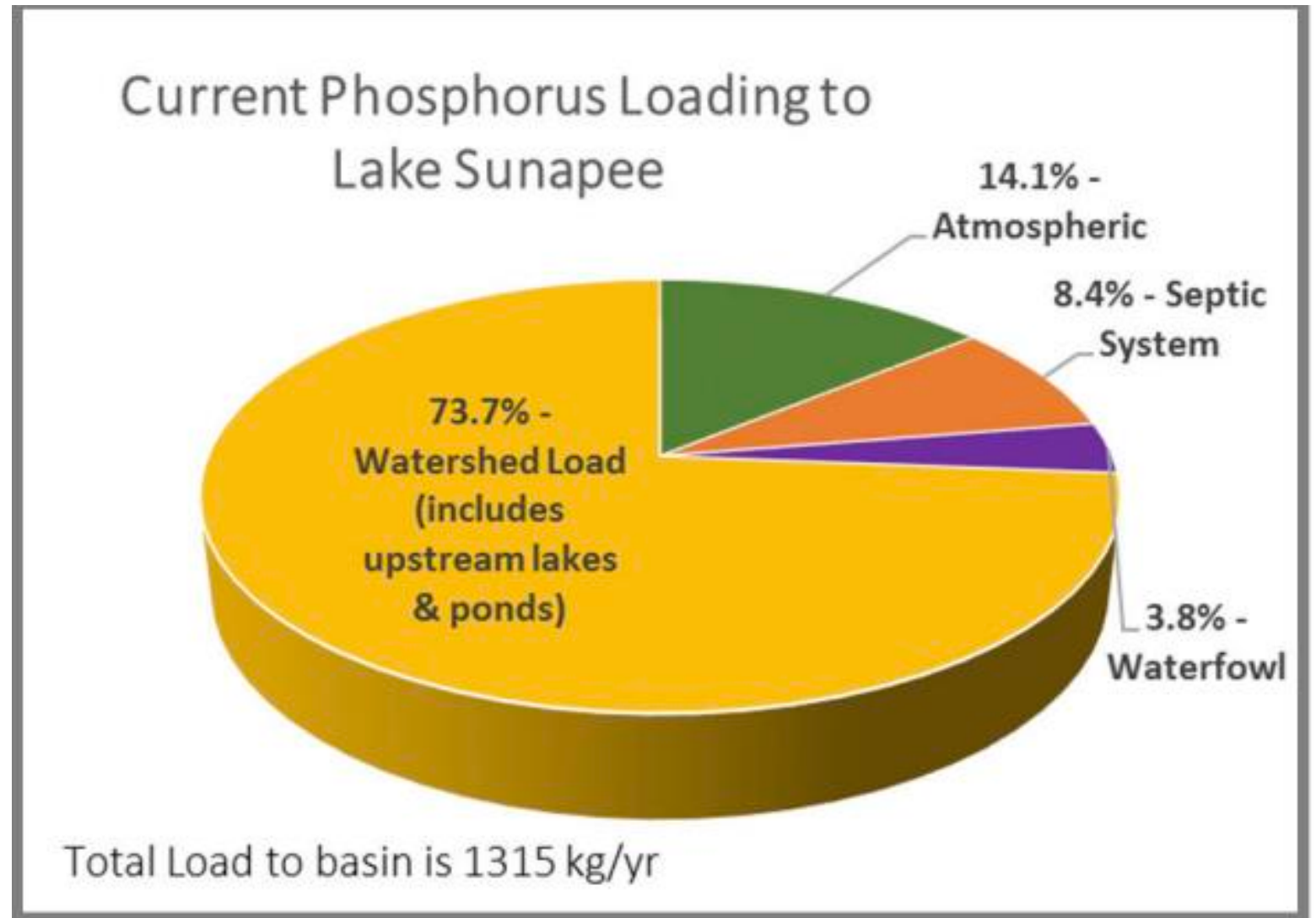


Photo Credit: Midge Eliassen



Photo Credit: Ray Barrette

What are the sources of pollution?



Stormwater runoff and erosion are major drivers of pollution

- 
- Cyanobacteria blooms
 - Algae and weed growth
 - Sedimentation
 - Nutrient pollution
 - Stormwater runoff



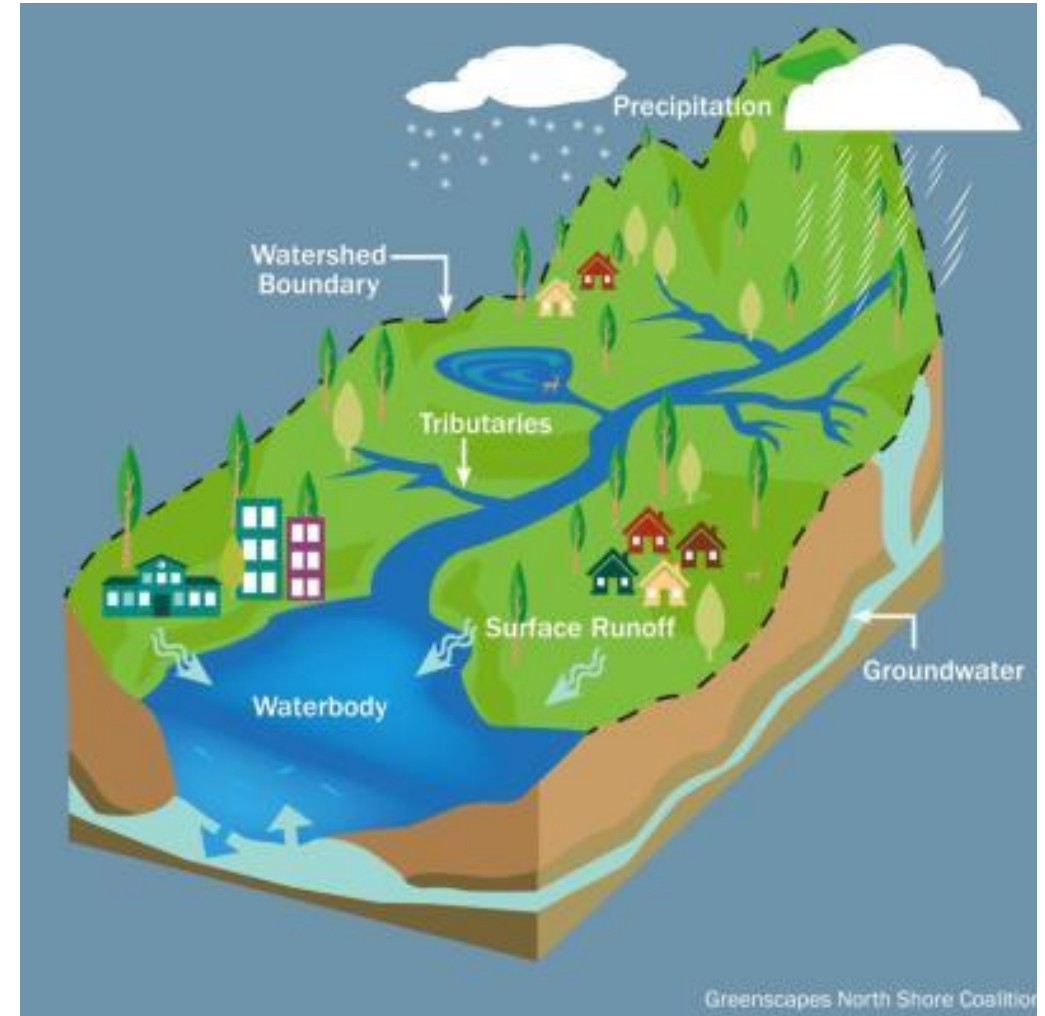
Photo Credit: NHDES



Photo Credit: Carol Wyman, Mascoma Lake



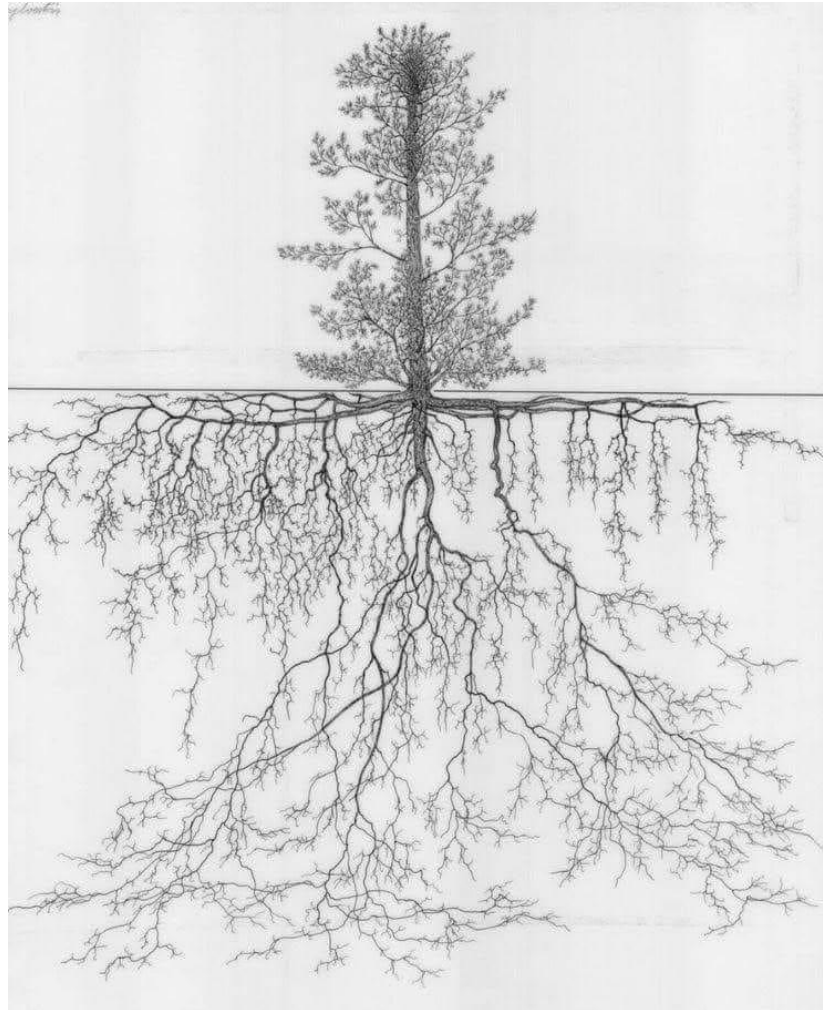
Vegetation is
easy, cheap, effective
pollution prevention



Water flows through
the watershed

Deeper roots = better for water quality

- Trees
 - Shrubs
 - Groundcover
 - Lawn
 - Bare soil





Outline

- Why think about vegetation?
- What can a homeowner do to protect water quality?

What can I do?

1. Keep trees
 - Trim to protect view
 - Replace any tree you remove
2. Do lawn differently
 - Plant a clover lawn
 - Replant lawn areas you don't use
 - Set your lawn mower to 3"
3. Avoid bare soil
 - Plant upslope
 - Plant shrubs/groundcover
 - Gravel infiltration steps along path
4. Vegetate your shoreline
5. Choose native plants



1. Keep your trees

- Trim branches to maintain the view
- Replace any that are dead/diseased



2. Do lawn differently

- Plant a clover lawn
- Replant lawn areas you don't use
- Set your lawn mower to 3"



Photo Credit: NH LAKES

2. Plant a clover lawn



- Can use it like a lawn
- Doesn't need mowing as often
- Doesn't need watering
- No need for fertilizer
 - Clover fixes its own nitrogen
- Stays green longer
- Wildlife like it
- Deeper roots than turf grass
 - Reduces erosion

2. Re-wild lawn that you don't use



Photo Credit: UNH

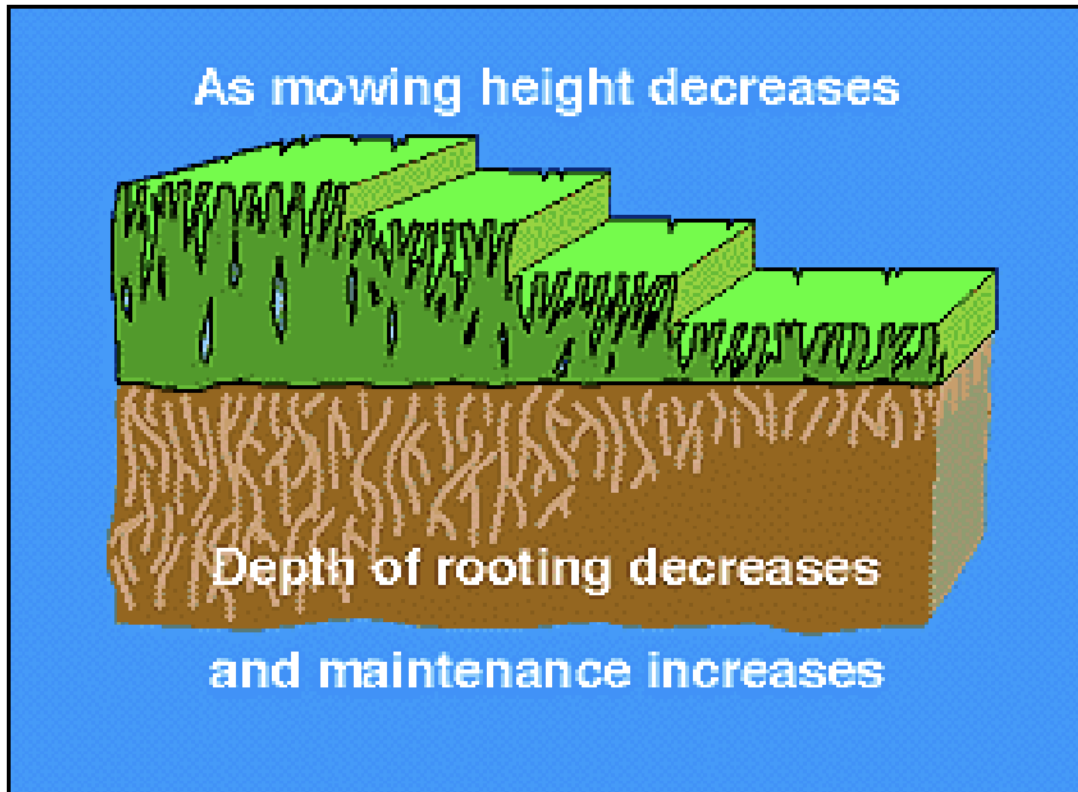


Photo Credit: NH LAKES



Photo Credit: Michael Nerrie

2. Set your lawn mower blades at 3" or more



Graphic from UNH



Photo Credit: NH LAKES

2. Do lawn differently

- Plant a clover lawn
- Replant lawn areas you don't use
- Set your lawn mower to 3"



Photo Credit: NH LAKES

3. Avoid bare soil





Fixes for bare soil

- In a landscaped area
 - Plant shrubs or groundcover to stabilize the area
 - Plant upslope so stormwater can't gather enough speed to create erosion
- Along a path
 - Install gravel infiltration steps
- Along a driveway or under the eaves
 - Install a gravel infiltration trench
- For more details see LSPA's Watershed Wise Resources
<https://www.lakesunapee.org/ww-resources>

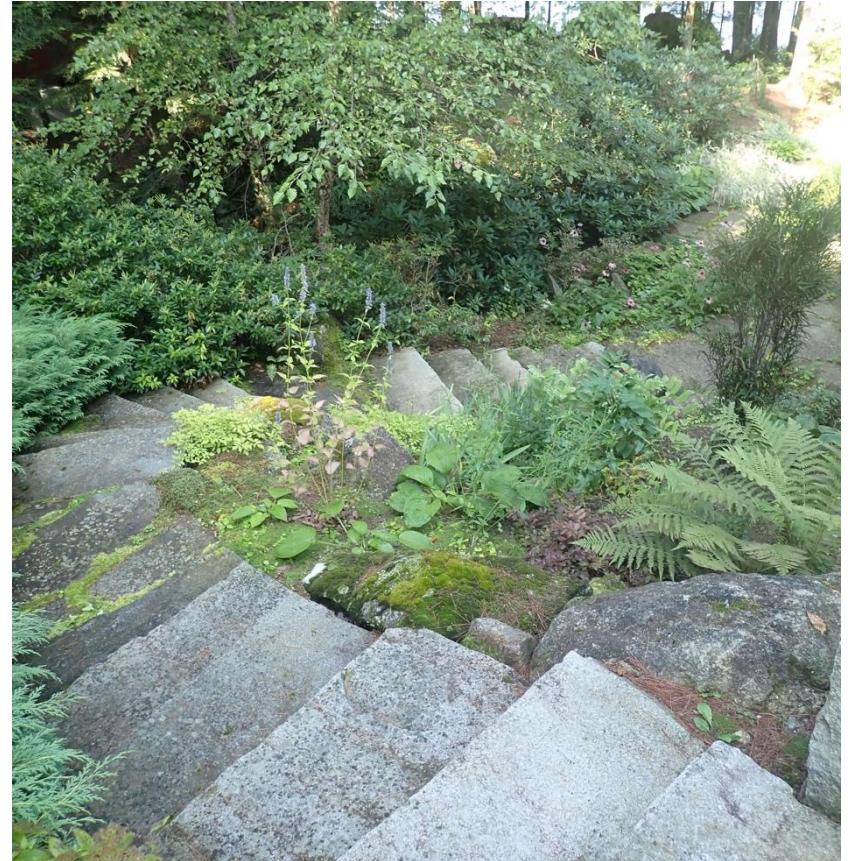
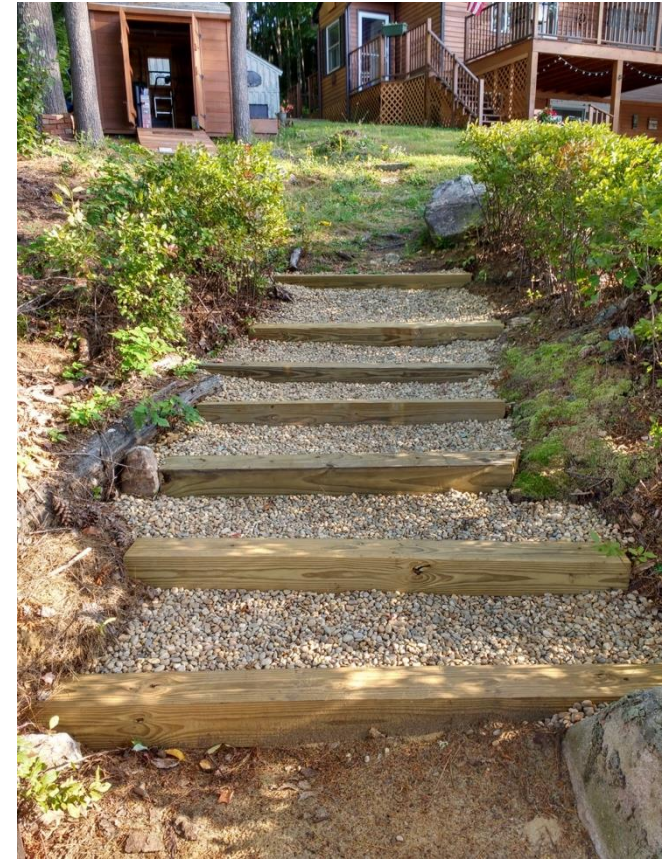
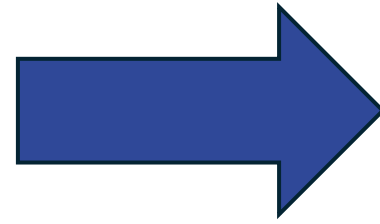
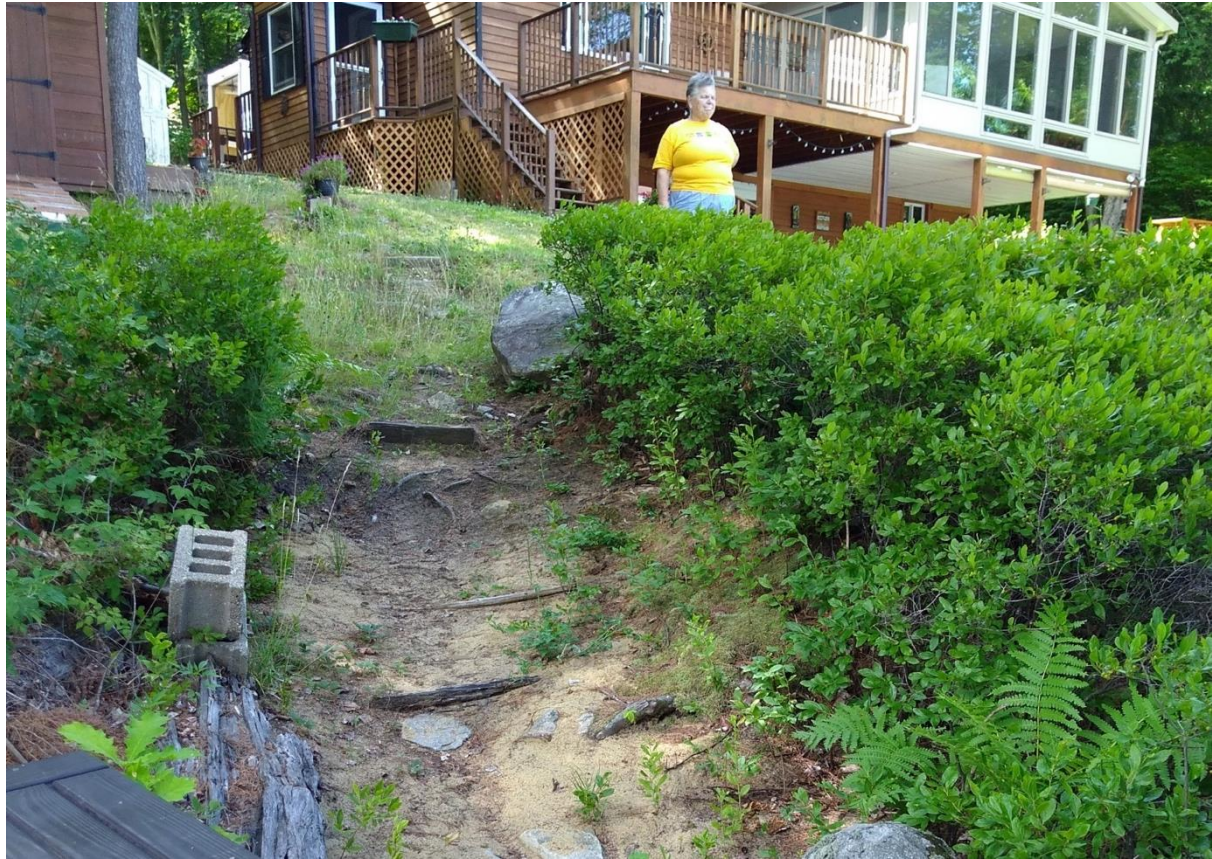


Photo from LSPA

Fixes for bare soil: infiltration steps



4. Vegetate along the shore

A vegetated shoreline is the lake's last line of defense



- Filters pollution from the watershed
- Reduces erosion
- Stabilizes the shoreline
- Reduces damage from wind, waves, wakes, ice

4. Vegetate along the shore



Photo from NH LAKES

4. Vegetate along the shore

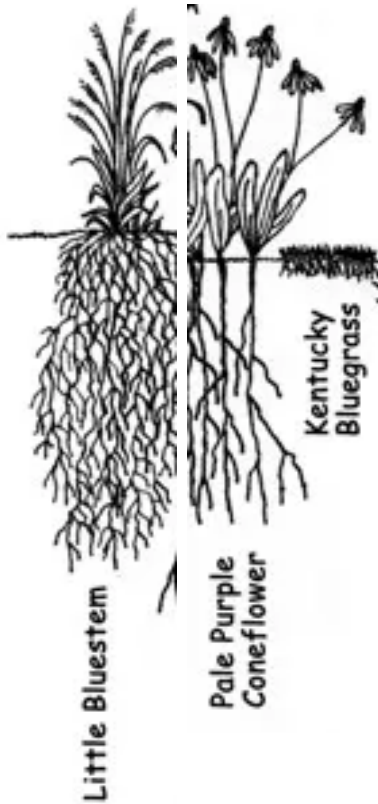


Photo from LSPA



4. Vegetate along the shore

5. Plant native species



- Eliminate the need for fertilizer
- Reduce the need to water
- Support biodiversity
- Deeper roots stabilize soils





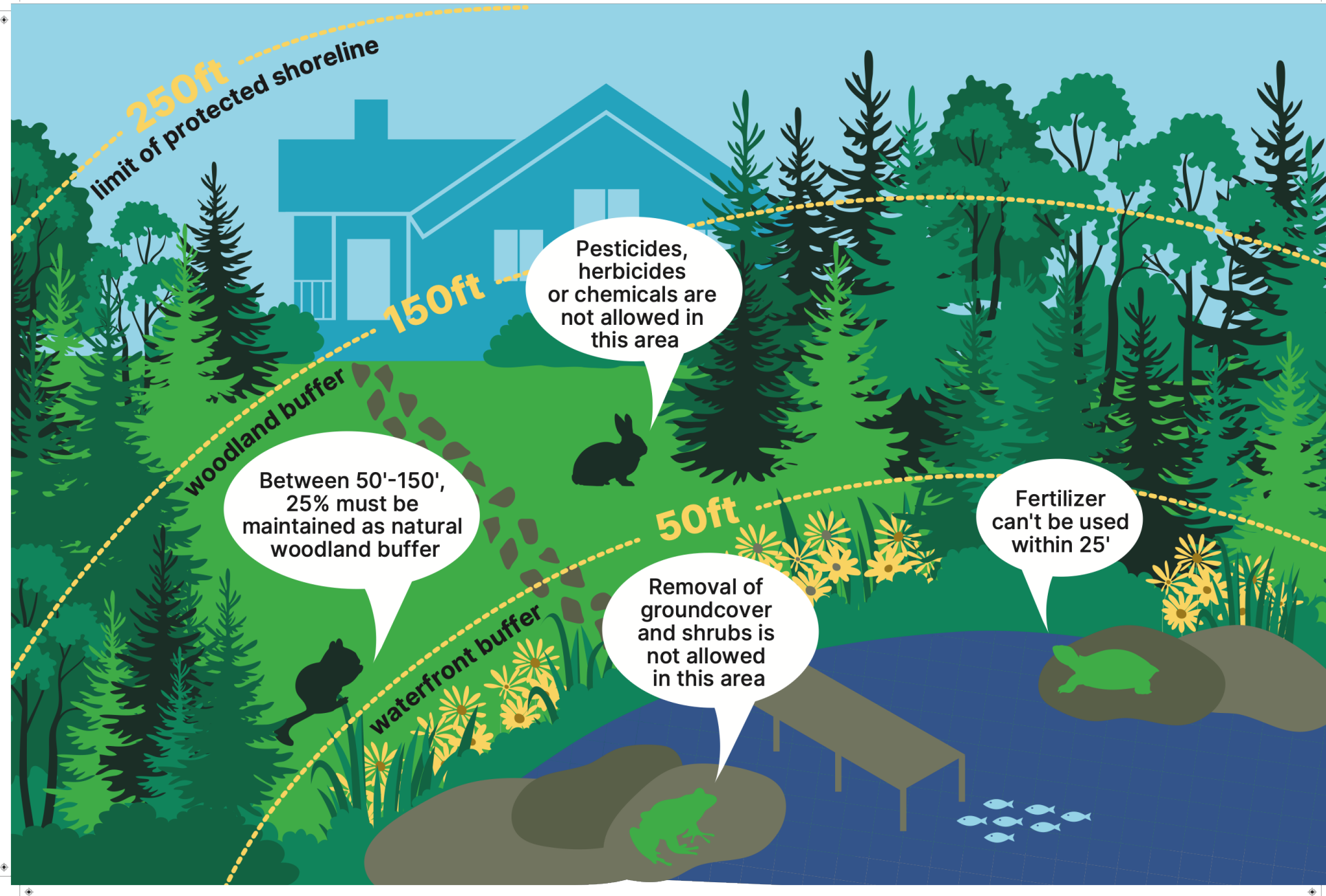
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Shoreland Act

Properties within
250' of shore



Not sure where to begin, or want help?

- LSPA Watershed Wise Program: get help from staff, and be recognized if your property is Watershed Wise
 - Free
 - Voluntary
 - Confidential
- NH LAKES LakeSmart Program
- LSPA's Watershed Wise Resources pages
 - How-to guides by property area
 - Plant and nursery lists
 - <https://www.lakesunapee.org/ww-resources>



Photo from LSPA

Remember why...



Photo Credit: Loon Preservation Committee



Photo Credit: New Hampshire State Parks



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Thank you! Questions?