



# Frequently Asked Questions by Shoreline Property Owners

## Frequently Asked Questions

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## About the Program

### What is the Love Your Lake program?

The Love Your Lake program is a packaged shoreline assessment and educational stewardship program that can be transferred to any shoreline community across the country. This program is coordinated and administered by Watersheds Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF) and is delivered by Regional Partner organizations.

The assessment will generate an accurate picture of the current state and health of a lake's shoreline. The program is designed to provide each shoreline property owner with a personalized property report, based on information from property-by-property assessments from a boat that details specific voluntary recommendations for stewardship action. The goal of the program is to improve shoreline and lake health.

### How does it work?

Lakes participating in the program have their shorelines assessed on a property-by-property basis by trained staff on a boat using a standardized Shoreline Survey Protocol and datasheet.

Shoreline property owners on participating lakes will receive a letter explaining the project and when they can expect the project to begin. Once the entire shoreline has been assessed and the information has been entered into the Love Your Lake database, shoreline property owners will receive a letter with a unique survey code to use online at [Report.LoveYourLake.ca](http://Report.LoveYourLake.ca) and order their personalized property report.

The report will contain information about the state of their unique shoreline with suggestions of voluntary actions that can be taken to improve the natural state of their shoreline and lake health.

Participating lakes will also receive a lake level report summarizing the data collected along the entire shoreline and encouraging stewardship actions at the community level.

### Who is involved?

The Love Your Lake program has been developed by Watersheds Canada and CWF with support and guidance from several regional organizations since 2012 (including the Bonnechere River Watershed Project, Muskoka Watershed Council, the City of Greater Sudbury, and Lakeland Alliance). Watersheds Canada and CWF provide program materials, marketing materials, training, and support to Regional Partners who facilitate local delivery with lake associations or lake stewardship organizations and to shoreline property owners. The program is designed to be delivered to entire lakes where shorelines of all properties are assessed without disrupting shoreline property owners.

In 2014, Regional Partners included the City of Greater Sudbury, Muskoka Watershed Council, Coalition of Haliburton Property Owners' Association and Lakeland Alliance to bring the program to the regions of Sudbury, Muskoka, Eastern Ontario, Haliburton and the Kawarthas.

### Why is it important?

Shorelines are one of the most unique places on earth and people's influences can have a huge impact on these delicate interfaces. Daily actions by all individuals can help conserve our lakes. Keeping shorelines healthy and natural is the easiest way to protect water quality. This not only helps maintain or improve property values but also provides cleaner, clearer water that will benefit future generations and wildlife.

## What is the history of the program?

Love Your Lake is a modified and updated version of a scientific protocol developed by MAPLE (Mutual Association for the Protection of Lake Environments) in the 1980s. Watersheds Canada had been using a modified shoreline assessment protocol for over ten years and in 2012 they partnered with the CWF to officially brand and broaden the program into the Love Your Lake program today.

## How is it funded?

Love Your Lake is a joint program of Watersheds Canada and CWF. To date, the program has received generous support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Rogers Foundation, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program.

## Which lakes have been assessed so far?

In 2013, 17 lakes participated in the program in 5 regions:

- **Renfrew Region:** Paugh Lake, Green Lake, and Round Lake
- **Eastern Ontario Region:** Otty Lake, Adam Lake, Farren Lake, Loughborough Lake, and Elbow Lake
- **City of Greater Sudbury:** St. Charles Lake, Hannah Lake, Fairbank Lake, Little Fairbank Lake, and Middle Lake
- **Muskoka Region:** Fairy Lake, Leonard Lake, and Peninsula Lake
- **Kawarthas Region:** Chandos Lake

In 2014, 17 lakes participated in the program in 5 regions:

- **Eastern Ontario Region:** Upper Rideau Lake, and Sharbot Lake – East Basin
- **City of Greater Sudbury:** Ramsay Lake (to be completed in 2015)
- **Muskoka Region:** Lake of Bays (to be completed in 2015) and Honey Harbour of Georgian Bay (South Bay, North Bay, and Church Bay)
- **Kawarthas Region:** Lake Kasshabog
- **Haliburton Region:** Boshkung Lake, Redstone Lake, Little Redstone Lake, Pelaw Lake, Bitter Lake, Burdock Lake, Koshlong Lake, Drag Lake, Spruce Lake, Kashagawigamog Lake, and Grass Lake

## How many properties have been assessed so far?

In 2013, over 4,400 shorelines on 17 lakes were assessed through the Love Your Lake program.

In 2014, over 5,100 shoreline properties on 17 lakes were assessed through the Love Your Lake program.

## Where can individuals find more information?

More information about Love Your Lake can be found at [LoveYourLake.ca](http://LoveYourLake.ca).

## About Shoreline Property Owners Properties and Participation

### Will assessment staff access individual properties?

No; staff will conduct assessments from the water by boat. Under no circumstances will staff be required to set foot on properties. However, for staff to properly complete the survey it will be required that they come within a few metres of the shoreline of each property.

## Are assessment staff looking for permit infractions?

No, staff are not looking for permit infractions; the goal of the program is strictly educational and is non-regulatory.

## Why are assessment staff taking photos?

Program staff take photos of each property being assessed. These photos are used for reference and confirmation when entering the collected data into the database. One photo is selected by program staff to include in each personalized property report. Some photos may be used for training purposes; however, identifiable information such as location, address, and ownership are not included or revealed. Photos will not be taken if people are within the field of view.

## What about privacy?

The Love Your Lake program administrators and Regional Partners take privacy matters very seriously. Love Your Lake field activities do not infringe upon personal privacy within the letter of the law.

Watersheds Canada and CWF provide each Regional Partner with policies, procedures, and agreements, including a Love Your Lake Privacy Policy and confidentiality agreements. Program staff and volunteers involved in delivering the program in each region (including program coordinators, shoreline assessment staff, volunteer boat drivers, and data enterers) are required to sign a confidentiality agreement. All information contained in the personalized property reports is non-regulatory. Lake level reports are based on summarized data.

Watersheds Canada and CWF must abide by the federal privacy legislation covered under the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA). The personal information of supporters, participants, and registered users is always held in the strictest of confidence and any use of this information is subject to consent.

For more information regarding our privacy measures, please visit [LoveYourLake.ca](http://LoveYourLake.ca) to view the Love Your Lake Privacy Policy.

## What if a shoreline property owner doesn't want to be involved?

Shoreline property owners can opt-out of receiving a personalized property report. However, data will still be collected for the benefit of the entire lake. If a shoreline property is not assessed, there will be a resulting gap in the lake level shoreline data.

We share our waters and shoreline property owners are encouraged to embrace this free opportunity for education of shoreline ecology and best management practices. Data collected is not reported for infractions, and the recommended stewardship actions are not mandated or enforced.

Lake organizations that represent the lake community voluntarily agree to be a part of this program. If shoreline property owners have any questions about their lake's involvement, they are encouraged to contact their local lake organization.

## Why are shoreline property owners automatically included in the program without their consent?

Regional Partners engage with known representative lake associations or lake stewardship organizations that are established and functioning to meet the needs of the local lake community. The lake groups engage with the Regional Partners to deliver the program to their lake community. Several opportunities are available for

shoreline property owners to learn about the program through their lake group, the regional organization, and/or Watersheds Canada and CWF.

### How can I get more involved?

Shoreline property owners can get in touch with their local lake organization or Regional Partner organization for more information about how to get more involved in protecting their lake.

Shoreline property owners can also visit [LoveYourLake.ca](http://LoveYourLake.ca) to take a shoreline self-assessment to determine the health of their shoreline. After which, they can download an action checklist for simple, yet meaningful, actions to maintain or improve shoreline and lake health.

If shoreline property owners are interested in volunteering their lake for participation in the Love Your Lake program, lake eligibility criteria and an application form can be found online at [LoveYourLake.ca](http://LoveYourLake.ca).

## About the Data and the Personalized Property Report

### What is the data used for?

Data is collected about each shoreline property to produce a personalized property report that will contain information about the state of each unique shoreline with suggestions of voluntary actions that shoreline property owners can take to improve the natural state of their shoreline and lake health.

Participating lakes will also receive a lake level report summarizing the data collected along the entire lakeshore and encouraging stewardship actions at the community level.

### How is the data stored?

The datasheets are in the possession of the Regional Partner organizations. Supporting program documents and information may also exist on the computers, servers or other office or operational infrastructure of the Regional Partner organizations and Love Your Lake program administrators. The data entered into the Love Your Lake database is stored on internal and/or external servers owned by the Love Your Lake program administrators.

### Who has access to the data?

Program staff with validated database login credentials from Watersheds Canada and CWF have access to the data, along with program staff at Regional Partner organizations. The results of individual assessments will not be available to anyone else, such as other regional organizations or lake organizations, but the shoreline property owner via their personalized property report. From time to time, requests to share data may be submitted to Watersheds Canada and CWF and this data may be shared in accordance with Canadian Law, providing all identifiable and personal information, such as property addresses, are removed.

### Who has access to the personalized shoreline property reports?

During production, staff from the contracted printing facility will be using electronic files and binding and packaging the printed reports for shipment. Staff from the Love Your Lake program administrators or from the Regional Partner organizations may, from time to time, require access to the personalized reports to resolve outstanding issues or questions (i.e., to resolve any discrepancies regarding content of a report). Otherwise, only the property owner will have access to their property report.

## How do shoreline property owners access their report?

Upon completion of the assessments and data entry for an entire lake, shoreline property owners will receive a letter in the mail. This coupon will contain a survey code, which is unique to each individual property. This letter will also provide instructions to visit [Report.LoveYourLake.ca](http://Report.LoveYourLake.ca), where shoreline property owners will enter the unique survey code and complete a registration form to order the report. Reports will be available as an electronic PDF or as a hardcopy.

If shoreline property owners do not have access to the internet, they can contact their Regional Partner organization to order their report.