



Be LakeSmart

Lakes Environmental Association

LakeSmart Tip: Spring Cleaning



As you open your camp this Spring, consider the following suggestions for protecting your lake.

Cleaning Up Yard Debris

Pine needles, leaves, and even downed branches supplement your property's duff and its ability to infiltrate storm water and promote vegetation and provide wildlife habitat on your property. Leave as much of this natural layer as possible while still being able to enjoy your property.

- Pine needles and leaves should not be raked up except to provide a buffer around your fire pit or to maintain your (hopefully minimal) lawn. Regarding lawns generally: Please avoid importing suburban aesthetics to lakeside Maine. It's Maine's lakeside wildness that we all love.

- Downed branches and other debris should only be removed in areas where you recreate or walk.
- Leaving the natural duff layer intact is the law in some towns. The duff layer is a critical part of the forest ecosystem and should be left intact outside of footpaths.

Activating Your Septic Tank

Septic tanks activate after the Winter naturally. No additive is needed to get its bacterial process started in the Spring. Rid-X and similar bacterial enzyme additives interfere with natural tank bacterial action, often causing accelerated breakdown of solids, turning sludge into a slurry which can then enter and plug up the leach field. Don't waste your money on products that don't work and can harm your septic system!

Maintaining Water Diverters

Open top culverts and/or rubber razors need periodic inspection and cleaning. Runoff into these diverters carries silt which builds and can reduce or eliminate the diverter's capacity to function. In open top culverts, remove the silt which settles. Similarly, clean up the silt which builds along the uphill edge of any rubber razor. And dredge the outlet edge of all diverters to remove the silt built up there.

At the Water's Edge

- Inspect your dock entrance to assure it's not allowing runoff into the lake.
- Assess whether there is any latent undercutting of the lake bank. If there is, please contact Lauren Pickford at LEA (lauren@mainelakes.org and 207-647-8580) or Roy Lambert, LEA Volunteer LakeSmart Coordinator (rld.lambert@gmail.com and 207-647-5352), for consultation.