

# WATERLINE

JUNE 2007

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For information about the organization call **1-800-607-5498** or visit the WALPA website [www.walpa.org](http://www.walpa.org)

Please save *WATERLINE* issues for future reference.

## WALPA Board News: Conference, Scholarships, Elections and More

By BiJay Adams, WALPA President

WALPA's annual conference will be held in Lake Chelan on October 18 and 19, with a theme of "Lakes – Bringing Science and Community Together." Mark your calendars now to attend! Please also consider sponsoring a lunch or one of the breaks, and let us know if you'd like to be a session exhibitor or a basic exhibitor. For more information, contact Beth Cullen at [beth.cullen@metrokc.gov](mailto:beth.cullen@metrokc.gov).

Last year WALPA approved two new membership categories: one for organizations/lake associations themselves, and another for individuals who belong to lake associations that are WALPA members. WALPA is still hoping to offer a reduced conference rate to lake association members who register together for annual conferences. Actual conference costs per person will determine whether we can implement a reduced lake association rate for this year's conference in Lake Chelan.

Get the word out to college students you know who are studying lakes and/or watersheds! A conference highlight once again this year will be the announcement of the three WALPA scholarship winners. WALPA will award two scholarships of \$500 and the Nancy Weller Memorial Scholarship of \$750. All application materials should be sent to the WALPA Scholarship Program Committee by July 15; email submission is preferred. For more information, please contact Beth Cocchiarella at [rbcocchiarella@msn.com](mailto:rbcocchiarella@msn.com).

The Board is seeking new board officers and members; interested WALPA members should contact Karl Mueller, Elections Committee Chair, at [karlwmueller@msn.com](mailto:karlwmueller@msn.com). Don't miss this chance to get more involved in lake protection, exercise your leadership skills, and help move WALPA forward. The WALPA Board convenes every other month on the second Monday.

Make sure to visit the WALPA website at its new address: [www.walpa.org](http://www.walpa.org).

Update the favorites list on your web browser so you don't miss out on this wonderful source of information about WALPA's board and committees, membership, annual conferences, meetings, news and scholarships. The site also features online versions of *Waterline* and a brand new service -- job postings! Check it out!



Campbell's Resort at Lake Chelan

# Phosphorus Fertilizer Regulations from Minnesota to Washington

By Rebecca Dugopolski, Environmental Engineer, Herrera Environmental Consultants

As lakes across the country are becoming increasingly eutrophic due to excess nutrients, many states and local jurisdictions have enacted or are contemplating ordinances to restrict the use of lawn fertilizers containing phosphorus. The hope is that these restrictions will decrease the nutrients carried in surface runoff to waterbodies. While many environmental groups, researchers, and local jurisdictions advocate for such regulations, observers are still awaiting conclusive results as to whether such restrictions will reduce phosphorus loading to surface waters.

Minnesota became the first state to pass legislation restricting the use of phosphorus in lawn fertilizers with the Minnesota Phosphorus Lawn Fertilizer Law in 2002. This law went into effect in the Twin Cities in 2004, followed by the entire state in 2005. A 2006 study found that

82% of the lawn fertilizer used in Minnesota was phosphorus-free (i.e., contained less than 0.67% phosphate), resulting in a 38% reduction in phosphorus-containing fertilizers since 2003 (MDA 2007). The law does not ban phosphorus fertilizers completely; applications are allowed for new lawns, if soil tests show a phosphorus deficiency, and on golf courses and sod farms. Although water quality data has yet to be evaluated, two research studies are now underway in Minnesota to assess nutrient runoff from lawns and evaluate the effectiveness of phosphorus loading reductions to surface waters. In 2003, EPA reported that the City of Plymouth, Minnesota enacted a phosphorus fertilizer ban in 1996 and observed a 23% reduction in phosphorus inputs to Medicine Lake compared to phosphorus loading from the neighboring City of Maple Grove.



*Phosphorus Free Fertilizer  
1st Number = Nitrogen  
2nd Number = Phosphorus  
3rd Number = Potassium*

*Continued inside on page 3*

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## Phosphorus Fertilizer Laws

Continued from page 2

Phosphorus fertilizer laws have been proposed in several other states including Florida, Maine, Michigan, New Jersey, and Wisconsin. Local jurisdictions that limit phosphorus fertilizers include: Muskegon County, Ottawa County, and Ann Arbor, MI; Jefferson Township, NJ; and Dane County and Polk County, WI. Florida proposed a rule earlier this year, expected to take effect this spring, that would limit fertilizers sold in the state to those with no or low phosphate content (*St. Petersburg Times* 2007). Legislation in Maine restricting the sale of phosphorus fertilizer, expected to take effect in January 2008, recently passed in the House and the Senate. The law will require sellers to post signs informing buyers that certain fertilizers can be used only to establish new lawns or if soil tests show a phosphorus deficiency (Maine Legislature 2007). Phosphorus fertilizer restrictions in Muskegon County, MI, scheduled to take effect at the beginning of 2007, are currently being contested because of a state law that supersedes the county ordinance (*Muskegon Chronicle* 2007).

In Washington, the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County regulate the use of phosphorus-containing fertilizers on residential lawns and public properties within the Lake Whatcom Watershed, with the exception of newly established lawns during the first growing season (Lake Whatcom Cooperative Management 2007). A phosphorus-free fertilizer called the "Lake Whatcom Blend" has been developed and is available in local stores. In Eastern Washington, the Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District adopted a policy banning phosphorus lawn fertilizer in November 2005, but has no enforceable regulations on fertilizer use (Liberty Lake SWD 2005). Although Washington State was the first in the nation to legislate standards for heavy metals in fertilizers, no statewide phosphorus regulations have been implemented.

## Phosphorus Limits in Washington? You Help Decide!

Join other WALPA members to discuss whether legislation to limit phosphorus in lawn fertilizers would be appropriate for some areas in Washington. The plenary session of WALPA's annual conference in October will consider the issues surrounding this idea, and a committee may be formed at that time to study the opportunities. Please contact Rob Zisette at [rzisette@herrerainc.com](mailto:rzisette@herrerainc.com) if you are interested in participating.

### To learn more about the issue of phosphorus in fertilizer, visit these sites:

#### Maine:

<http://www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/doclake/fert/phospage.htm>

#### Michigan:

[http://www.greatlakesdirectory.org/mi/121406\\_great\\_lakes.htm](http://www.greatlakesdirectory.org/mi/121406_great_lakes.htm)

<http://www.muskegonhealth.net/programs/environmental/phosphorus.htm>

<http://www.a2gov.org/PublicServices/SystemsPlanning/Environment/Fertilizer.html>

#### Minnesota:

<http://www.mda.state.mn.us/appd/ace/phoslaw.htm>

#### New Jersey:

<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/watershedmgmt/DOCS/focus/FALL06.pdf>

#### Wisconsin:

<http://www.danewaters.com/management/phosphorus.aspx>

<http://www.ricelakeonline.com/newarticle.asp?ArticleID=11833>

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- U.S. EPA. 2003. Nonpoint Source News-Notes. Issue #71. <http://www.epa.gov/owow/info/NewsNotes/issue71/71issue.pdf>
- St. Petersburg Times. 2007. Florida may go green through fertilizer limits. [http://www.sptimes.com/2007/03/29/State/Florida\\_may\\_go\\_green\\_shtml](http://www.sptimes.com/2007/03/29/State/Florida_may_go_green_shtml)
- Maine Legislature. 2007. An Act to Protect and Improve Lake Water Quality. <http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/LD.asp?LD=587>
- Muskegon Chronicle. 2007. State law undercuts county fertilizer ban. <http://www.mlive.com/news/chronicle/index.ssf?base/news-11/117673476065350.xml&coll=8>
- Lake Whatcom Cooperative Management. 2007. <http://www.ci.bellingham.wa.us/documents/pw/environment/phosphorus-brochure.pdf>
- Liberty Lake SWD. 2005. Phosphorus Lawn Fertilizer No-Use Policy. Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District. [http://www.libertylake.org/Website\\_documents/Phosphorus\\_Fertilizer\\_Resolution\\_Approved.pdf](http://www.libertylake.org/Website_documents/Phosphorus_Fertilizer_Resolution_Approved.pdf)

# Ecology Launches Freshwater Algae Control Program

By Tricia Shoblom

Washington's Department of Ecology (DOE) has developed a Freshwater Algae Control Program with funding provided by the state legislature. With an annual budget of \$250,000, the program will identify and test the toxicity of blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) samples from Washington waters.

The program will focus on cyanobacteria because of its health risk to humans, pets, wildlife, and livestock. Filamentous algae (stringy floating mats) can be a nuisance, but don't pose the health risk that blue-green algae can.

County health districts around the state will sample algae and send them to the lab for testing; results will be available in an online database. As part of the program, DOE will provide small grants -- \$25,000 to \$50,000 -- to local governments for algae or nutrient management projects beginning next fall.

In conjunction with the algae control program, Washington State Department of Health is beginning to develop state-wide guidelines for toxic algae blooms. These guidelines will help local health districts determine when to post advisories or close a water body to recreation.

To learn more about the Department of Ecology's new Freshwater Algae Control Program, visit: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/plants/algae/index.html>. If

you think your lake is experiencing a blue-green algae bloom, please contact Tricia Shoblom at (425) 649-7288 or [tsho461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:tsho461@ecy.wa.gov). If you have questions about human health impacts related to algae blooms, please contact: F. Joan Hardy, PhD., Washington State Department of Health, at (360) 236-3173 or [joan.hardy@doh.wa.gov](mailto:joan.hardy@doh.wa.gov).



*This is an urban lake experiencing a blue-green algae bloom. All nutrient inputs from the surrounding watershed flow directly into this small lake.*

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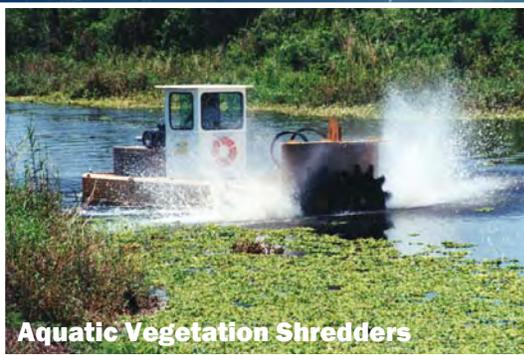


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## Report from Lake Geneva

*Continued from cover*

resulting “mud islands.”

In 2005 and 2006, we hired two divers to hand-pull the milfoil, but last summer’s hot weather spurred such thick weed growth that hand-pulling was not very effective. Plans for this summer include the possible use of herbicides on the milfoil if needed.

Another arm of our organization is political action. In 2005 the County threatened to cut its funding for lake stewardship at Lake Geneva, but we contacted our representative and the money was partially restored. Last summer, we circulated a petition asking the King County Council to prohibit internal combustion engines on our lake. Our local council member supports this



*Winter Snow on Lake Geneva*

resolution, which is now being considered by the law and justice committee of the council. Several of our members are active lake monitors under the King County Lake Stewardship program; our organization’s connection to that program has been very helpful.

At present, 26 dues-paying families belong to the Lake Geneva Property Owners Association. The Executive Board, which includes the officers, committee chairs, and two members-at-large, meets before each homeowners’ meeting – there are two general meetings a year -- and whenever there is a need. The past two summers we have invited all the residents to a potluck picnic and meeting at a member’s home. These potlucks have provided a great chance to socialize, discuss concerns, get input from a large number of Lake Geneva area residents, and urge everyone to join the organization.

## Help Revitalize Ecology’s Lakes Program!

**By Kelly McLain**

Washington’s Department of Ecology has worked to restore our state’s lakes for more than 25 years. Initially, and for about a dozen years, efforts were funded by both state and federal monies, and many lakes benefited. Since the mid-90’s, however, federal funding has become increasingly scarce, and Ecology staff have been working with dwindling resources to protect lakes. In recent years, Ecology has been able to fund only small projects on lakes, primarily around aquatic plant or algae control.

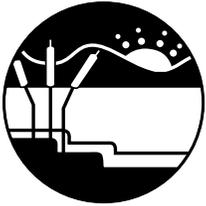
Ecology staff believe there is a need to re-create our lakes program. Urban lakes are full of nutrients, and invasive aquatic plant and algae problems are on the rise.

To address this concern, Ecology staff met recently with key members of the lake protection community, including representatives from county governments, major universities, consulting firms, WALPA, and lake residents. The group has agreed to take on the task of identifying what issues a new and improved lakes program should address, the cost of such a program, and potential funding sources. Ecology staff will continue to meet with this group and others over the next year or so. If you have questions or comments about this effort, or would like to be involved, please contact Kathy Hamel at (360) 407-6562 or [kham461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:kham461@ecy.wa.gov).

### Join Us in Lake Chelan this October!

This year’s WALPA conference, with the theme of “Lakes—Bringing Science and Communities Together,” will be held at Campbell’s Resort on Lake Chelan October 18 and 19. Session topics will include Noxious Weeds/Animals, Nutrient Issues Facing Lakes, Freshwater Mussels, Blue-Green Algae, Volunteer Programs, Focus on Community Efforts, Focus on Lakes and Reservoirs, Shoreline Master Program Updates and Climate Change Effects on the Northwest’s Aquatic Systems.

Register before October 1st and pay only \$130 for both days of the conference including lunch. Reserve your room at Campbell’s Resort right away (1-800-553-8225); mention the WALPA conference for a rate of \$60 per night. Take a look at the preliminary conference program in this newsletter and contact Beth Cullen at [beth.cullen@metrokc.gov](mailto:beth.cullen@metrokc.gov) or (206) 263-6242 if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you this October!



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## Report from Lake Geneva: Property Owners Work Together to Protect the Lake

By Sue Yunker-Jones

Lake Geneva is a small lake near Federal Way in southern King County. The lake covers 29 acres; about 40 homes have lakeside frontage. At one end is a County park and at the other is a boat ramp maintained by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, which stocks the lake with trout each spring.

When we moved to our home on Lake Geneva in 1997, the property owners' organization had been inactive for a number of years. Because residents were concerned about a growing infestation of fragrant water lilies, though, they had an interest in revitalizing the group.

One day when we were canoeing on the lake, we discovered an infestation of Eurasian water milfoil, and that galvanized efforts to get homeowners involved. With help from the King County Lake Stewardship program, we applied for and received a small grant to help pay for eradicating the noxious weeds.

One very important aspect of the Lake Geneva Property Owners' Association is an active noxious weed committee with an involved and enthusiastic chairperson. With the committee's oversight, the fragrant water lilies were sprayed with herbicide and a group of homeowners volunteered to deal with the



*Summer Swimmers on Lake Geneva*

*Continued inside on page 7*