

# HARVEYS LAKE AND YOU

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO  
PROTECTING YOUR LAKE

Harveys Lake Environmental  
Advisory Council

*Produced in cooperation with*  
The Borough of Harveys Lake  
and Misericordia University

# ABOUT THE HARVEYS LAKE ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Harveys Lake Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) is a group of your neighbors who are committed to protecting the environment and improving the water quality in Harveys Lake. The council was created in 1985 as part of a statewide program intended to engage residents in guiding local government policy on environmental issues.

Our mission is to advise and assist the borough in addressing environmental threats in the Harveys Lake watershed and to educate residents on practices to maintain the lake's health and beauty for future generations.

Throughout the years, the Harveys Lake EAC has helped preserve and improve conditions in the lake through a variety of initiatives, often in partnership with organizations including the borough itself, area schools, non-profit groups, and government agencies.



You can learn more about the  
Harveys Lake EAC at: [www.hleac.org](http://www.hleac.org).

# WHAT HAPPENS IN HARVEYS LAKE, STAYS IN HARVEYS LAKE

A **watershed** is an area of land which drains into a common body of water such as an ocean, lake, river, or aquifer. Harveys Lake Borough is special in that nearly the entire municipality lies within the Harveys Lake watershed. This means that when it rains in our borough, runoff collects in our very own lake. The total volume of Harveys Lake is huge, but its single outlet stream is relatively small, so much of the pollution that enters the lake remains there for a long period of time.

The population of year-round residents in the Borough of Harveys Lake has significantly increased over the past few decades. More people means more development, more human activity, and more stormwater runoff.

**Phosphorus** is a primary pollutant carried by stormwaters into Harveys Lake, and is a key target of our EAC. Elevated levels of phosphorus stimulate excessive growth of algae and aquatic plants. Algae is destructive to lake life, and excess aquatic plant growth can interfere with human recreation. Over the past 25 years, the Harveys Lake EAC has reached over 60 percent of its goal to decrease phosphorus levels. We expect to reach 100 percent of our goal within this decade.

**Stormwater runoff** occurs when water from rain, snow, or ice melt flows over the earth's surface instead of being absorbed into the ground. It often picks up dirt, debris, chemicals, and other contaminants, which leads to water pollution. This has many adverse effects on plants, wildlife, and people. Stormwater runoff poses one of the greatest threats to the health of Harveys Lake.

# YOUR LAWN AND THE LAKE

Pennsylvania soils typically don't need fertilizers with phosphorus to promote healthy plant growth. But when you do use fertilizer, keep in mind that rain can wash it into the lake. Fertilizer in the lake will cause excess plant growth, green scum, and algae that pose a serious threat to water quality. Poor water quality is harmful to aquatic plant and animal life, as well as to us.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Look for phosphorus-free fertilizer—look for the zero! Check the fertilizer bag for a set of three numbers, which represent its percentage of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. The number in the middle should be a “0.”

**It's the law to protect your lake!** To help clean up the lake, the borough passed an ordinance prohibiting the use of phosphorus in lawn fertilizers.

Review the borough ordinance on Lawn Fertilizers.

# YOUR HOME AND THE LAKE

**Is your house under construction?**

**Are you planning an outdoor building project? Are your neighbors?**

Whether you are a homeowner or contractor, careful soil excavation is crucial when working on property in the Harveys Lake watershed. Soil contains phosphorus; disturbed soils washing into the lake are harmful to water quality.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

**It's the law to protect your lake!** Use best management practices (BMPs) every time you or your contractor move soil in our borough. Be sure to obtain the proper permit required by the borough and to comply with state law.

Review the borough ordinance on Erosion and Sediment Control.

# PROTECT YOUR LAKE:

It might seem like fun, and ducks are certainly loved by many—but we now know that feeding ducks is unhealthy for them and for the environment. It is also unnecessary, as migratory waterfowl have always visited Harveys Lake to feed on natural foods.

“People food” is not part of a healthy duck diet; it is actually the equivalent of “junk food” for them. Bread and similar products (crackers, chips, and popcorn) are full of carbohydrates that offer little nutritional value for waterfowl, and can cause these health problems:

- Excessive Weight Gain
- Malnutrition
- Diseases
- Pest Attraction
- Loss of Natural Behavior
- Overpopulation
- Water Pollution



# DON'T FEED THE DUCKS

Waterfowl use the lake as their bathroom—think about what too many of them would mean for the water! Waterfowl waste directly impacts nutrient levels, promotes the growth of algae, and can contain harmful bacteria, especially when birds are fed unnatural foods that are not created by the lake system.

Our EAC has helped to increase awareness about this issue by installing signs around the lake in public view.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

**It's the law to protect your lake!** A person caught feeding waterfowl can be sentenced to pay a fine ranging from \$50 to \$300. Keep your lake clean by watching the birds from a distance—and pass the word along to other lake users.

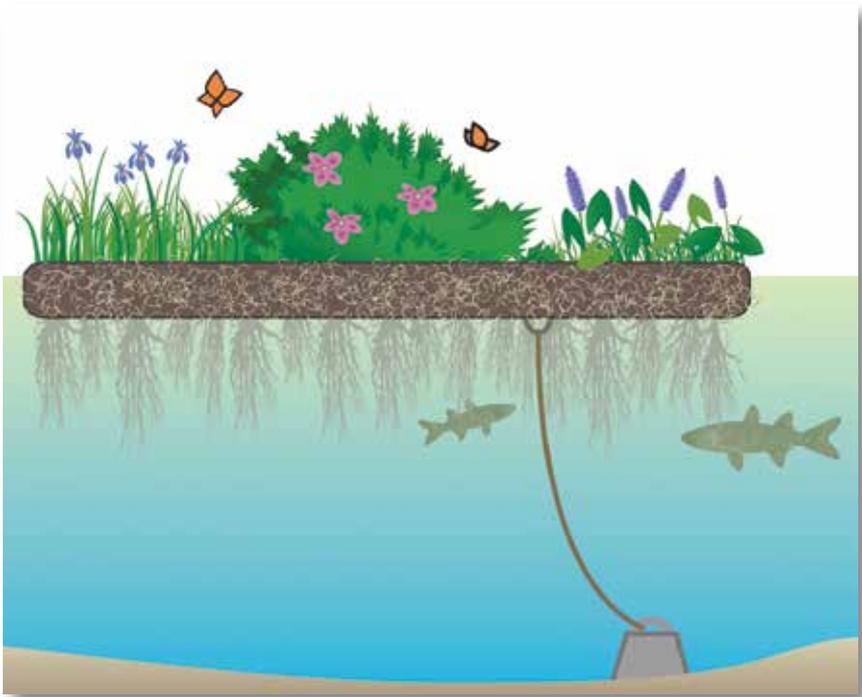
Review the borough ordinance on Feeding of Migratory Waterfowl.

# FLOATING WETLAND ISLANDS

A floating wetland island (FWI) is a man-made raft of native wetland plants that floats on the water's surface. Its plant, soil, and root interactions create a miniature natural wetland ecosystem.

FWIs consume nutrients, especially phosphorus. They help “clean” the lake and preserve aquatic life by providing a home for beneficial water-cleansing microorganisms. The plants on the islands act as filters as they remove phosphorus from the water.





These islands help keep the lake healthy for native aquatic plants and animals—and for our recreational use. For instance, they create fish habitat and enhance sport fishery.

In the spring of 2014, five FWIs were planted and deployed in Harveys Lake. They are anchored in strategic no-wake zones near the shoreline.

Don't disturb the islands! Cleaning in progress!

# 10 MORE THINGS YOU CAN DO

## TO HELP IMPROVE YOUR LAKE'S WATER QUALITY:

### **Note your boat.**

Clean your boat/trailer of plant material before launching to reduce the spread of invasive species; secure all items aboard; maintain engines and fuel system to prevent leakage.

### **Would you swim in that?**

Minimize your use of chemicals and seek natural alternatives. Don't pour anything questionable outside or into any part of the stormwater system.

### **Scoop the poop.**

Leaving pet waste on the ground harms the lake. Clean up after your dog and dispose of the waste in your garbage.

### **Check your car.**

Fluids that leak from vehicles often end up in the lake.

### **Pick up litter.**

Remove garbage from sidewalks, driveways, and parking lots, especially around storm drains.

### **Recycle.**

Curbside recycling occurs every other week in our borough. Check the website to view the calendar, list of accepted items, and disposal guidelines.

### **Sweep or rake it up.**

Plant debris clogs drains and has a negative impact when it enters waterways. As leaves decompose in the lake, they create the nutrients that contribute to algal growth.

### **Plant more plants.**

A vegetated buffer of trees, shrubs, or perennials helps protect the lake from your property's runoff. Stick to native plants—they are meant to grow here and will thrive.

### **Get creative.**

Try a rain barrel, porous paving option, or rain garden on your property.

### **Check your septic system.**

Have on lot systems inspected and pumped regularly (every 3 years) to ensure that they are functioning properly.

Everyone can have a positive impact on the lake.  
Smart choices begin with you!

# HOW YOU CAN LEARN MORE

Get involved! Join us for a monthly meeting. EAC meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month in the Harveys Lake General Municipal Authority Building. All meetings are open to the public and we welcome residents and visitors to attend.



Our work is a community effort!

**You may also contact us at:**

Environmental Advisory Council

Borough of Harveys Lake

4875 Memorial Highway, Suite 101

P.O. Box 60

Harveys Lake, PA 18618

Phone: 570.639.2113 • Fax: 570.639.3063

[www.hleac.org](http://www.hleac.org) • [info@hleac.org](mailto:info@hleac.org).

**Thank you for your cooperation as we work together as a community to keep Harveys Lake clean and green!**

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LET'S PROTECT OUR LAKE!



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