



# Natural is Beautiful

Healthy Shorelines for Healthy Lakes

Paige Jessup, Climate Change Resiliency Intern  
Watersheds Canada



**Watersheds**  
C A N A D A



**Chloe Lajoie**  
**National Conservation Director**  
**[Lajoie@watersheds.ca](mailto:Lajoie@watersheds.ca)**

Your Lakes. Your Rivers. Your Future.

**[watersheds.ca](http://watersheds.ca)**





- Located in Perth, Ontario
- Federally incorporated, non-profit organization
- Registered Canadian charity
- Providing programs in communities across Canada since 2002.
- Engage and help shoreline owners enhance and protect the health of lakes and rivers.











## Lakes are Facing Challenges

# Lake environments face challenges

- Increasing development pressures
- Increasing population density
- Increasing resource use
- Decreasing wildlife habitat
- Degrading water quality





From natural, fully vegetated,  
healthy shorelines...







To this...







# The Problem Canada's Lakes are Facing





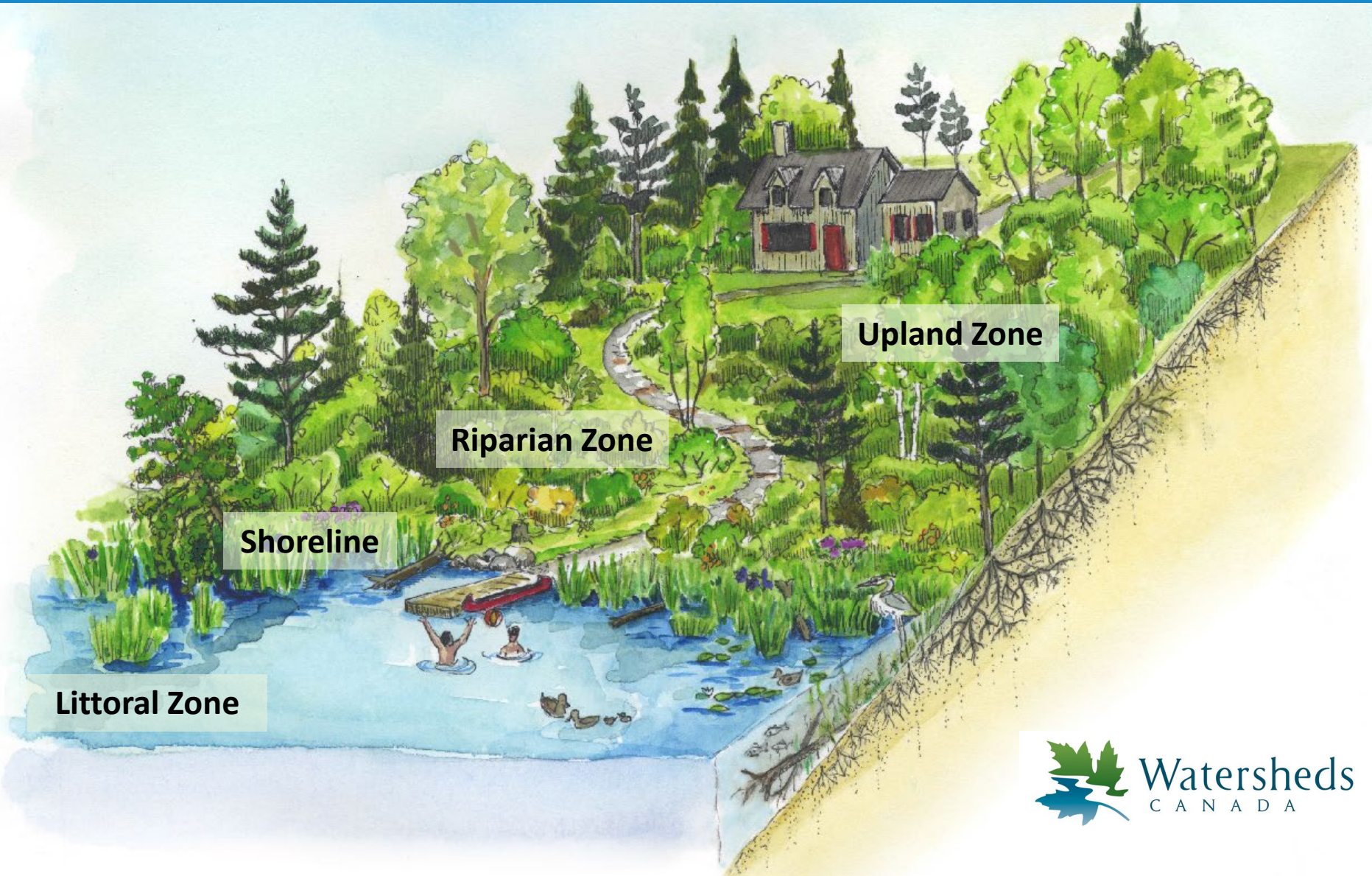


Critical Fish & Wildlife Habitat  
is being compromised...





# Healthy Freshwater Depends on Healthy Shorelands





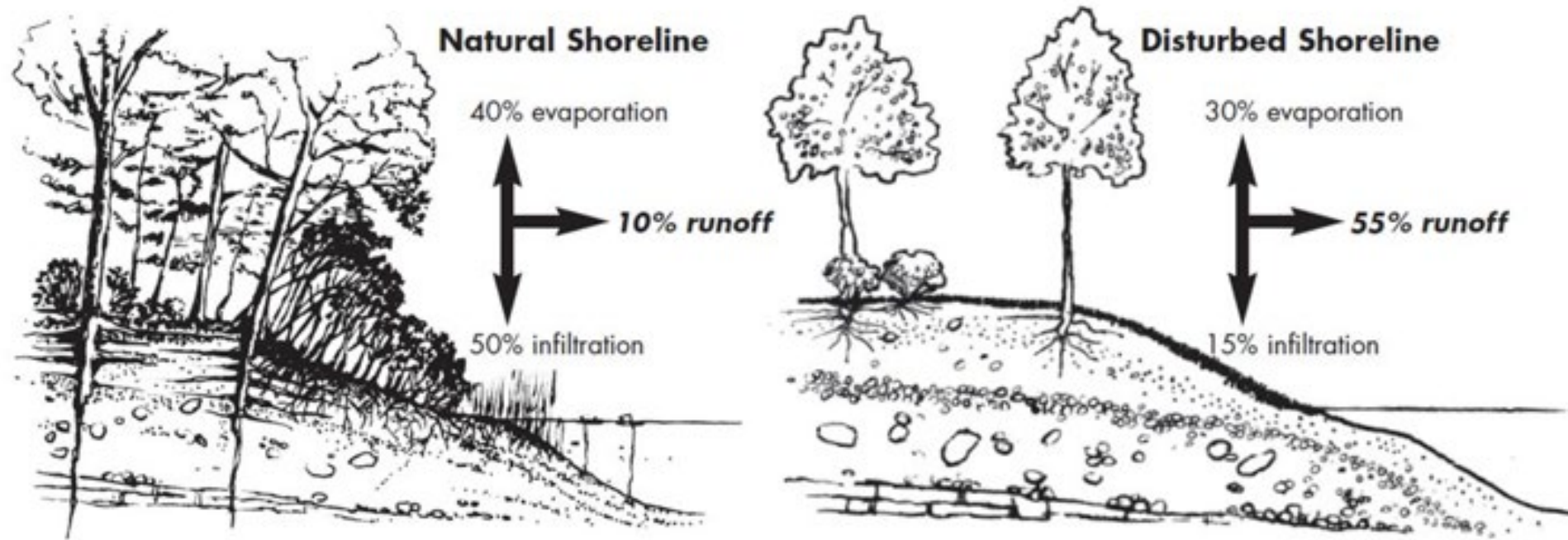


PEOPLE NEED TO KEEP AT LEAST  
75% OF THEIR SHORELINE NATURAL

90% OF AQUATIC SPECIES AND  
70% OF TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE NEED  
A HEALTHY SHORELINE TO SURVIVE



# Improves Water Quality



Native vegetation protects water quality from polluted runoff, and helps soil absorb water.

Hard surfaces and reduced vegetation increase runoff and erosion potential, and decrease absorption by the soil.

Natural shorelands promote soil infiltration and subsequent reduction in runoff. Adapted from: *Benefits of a Natural Shoreline*, by Rideau Valley Conservation Authority. Retrieved from: <https://www.rvca.ca/stewardship-grants/shoreline-naturalization/benefits-of-a-natural-shoreline>.



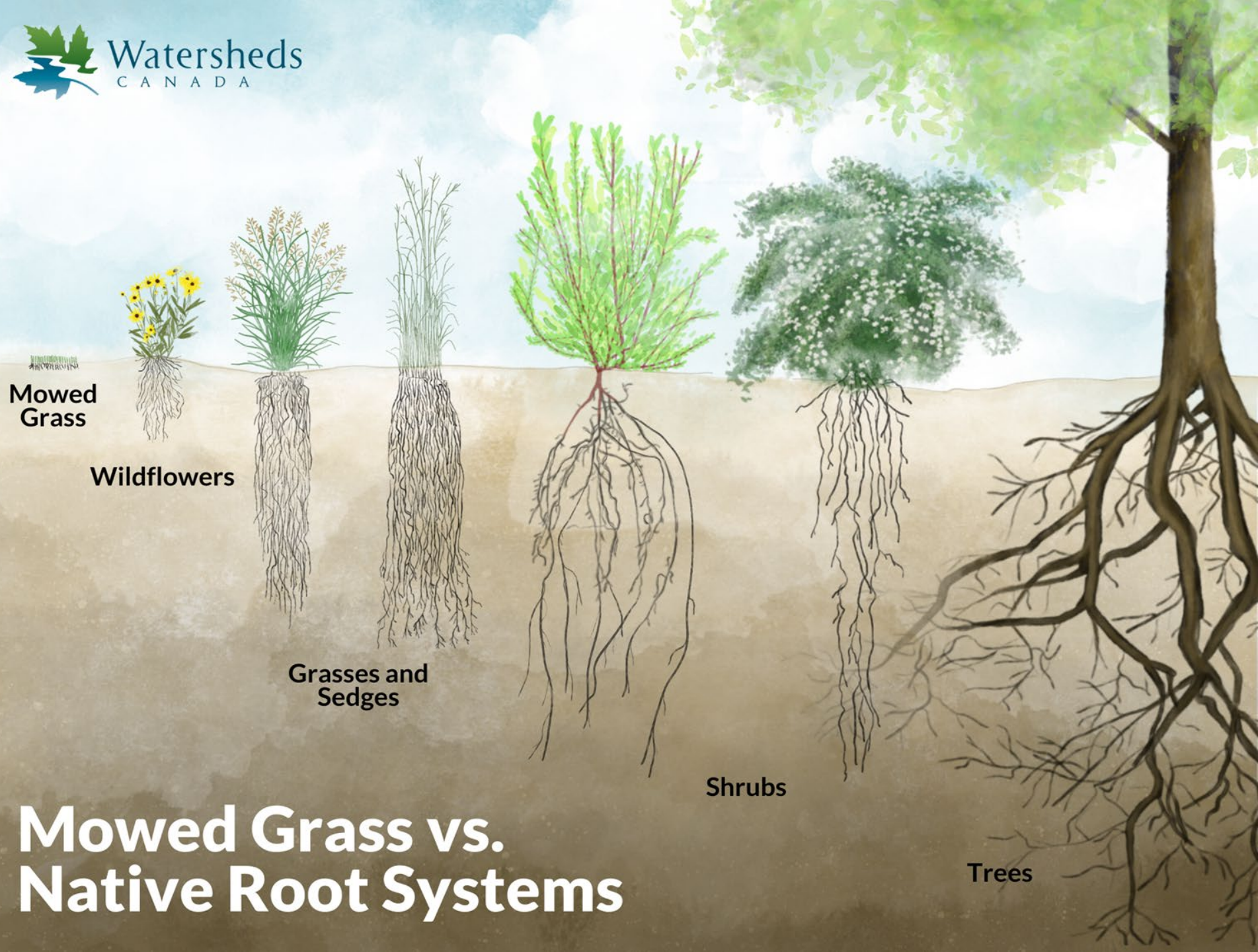


# Stabilizes Soil

Roots hold soil in place, reducing erosion and land loss from:

- Boat wakes
- Waves
- Flooding
- Increased water runoff





# Mowed Grass vs. Native Root Systems



# A Look Underwater at a Developed Shoreline





# A Look Underwater at a Healthy Shoreline





# What is the Love Your Lake Program?

- Every property on the lake was assessed using a standardized assessment protocol - observation only via boat
  - Structures & docks
  - Erosion control structures
  - Vegetation & habitat
- Landowners will get a personalized property report with details on the state of their shoreline and recommended actions for improving lake health for people and wildlife
- Value Survey results and a Lake Level Report is provided to each lake (with no personal information revealed)





# Personalized Shoreline Property Report

- Free download or purchase a printed copy for \$20
- Generated from assessment data
- Specific to each shoreline property owner
- Recommendations for voluntary actions
- Additional local resources
- Non-regulatory



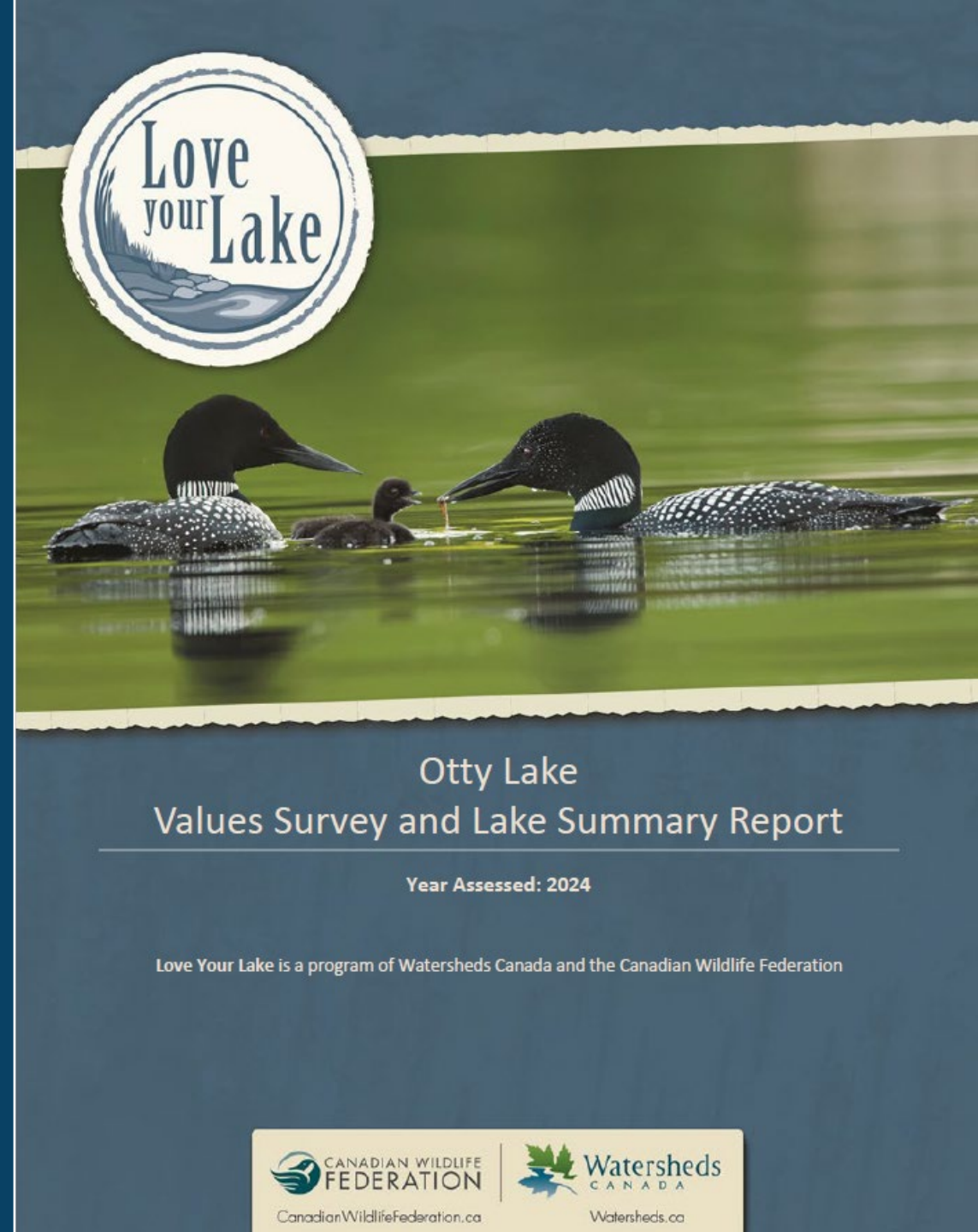
SHORELINE PROPERTY REPORT





# Value Survey & Lake Summary Report

- Summarizes Values Survey responses and assessment data
- No identification information included (names, addresses)
- Encourages community stewardship actions
- Resource for lake organizations





# Otty Lake Values Survey Results:

- 438 properties surveyed
- 63 respondents to the Values Survey
- 26 (41%) seasonal residents
- 36 (57%) permanent residents.
- 2 (3%) own vacant property
- 1 (2%) operates a business



Photo credit: OLA website



## Top Recreational Activities Enjoyed

<b>Recreational Activities:</b>	<b># of respondents</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
• Swimming	56	89%
• Canoeing or Kayaking	55	87%
• Nature Appreciation	43	68%

The most important elements, valued for their impact on personal enjoyment of the lake, included:

**water quality, scenery/view, and swimming.**



# Issues Facing Otty Lake

- Water Quality
- Faulty or Poorly Maintained Septics
- Shoreline Development

## Top Water Quality Concerns

- Algae & Aquatic Vegetation
- Bacteria
- Chemical Contamination



Note: Photo is NOT from Otty Lake



# Perceived Water Quality Concerns

- 71% perceive water quality to be good
- 17% perceive water quality to be excellent.



# 2024 Top 3 Actions Identified By Shoreline Property Owners



1. Engage in a Septic Re-Inspection Program
2. Create/Enforce Stricter Rules for New Development
3. Limit Boat Wakes near Shore



# LYL Results – 43,000 meters of Shoreline Assessed



Photo credit: OLA website

## 2024 Results

### Buffer Recommendations:

- 45 properties – create buffer
- 209 properties – expand buffer
- 184 properties – great as is

\*Note: 187 difficult to create 30m buffer

- **Create – 1,476 meters**
- **Expand – 14,131 meters**
- **Great As is – 27,629 meters**





# LYL Shoreline Assessments: 2013 vs 2024



- 2013: Initial LYL assessment of shoreline health
- 2024: Follow-up LYL observations using improved protocols
- Results are not directly comparable – but trends are clear





# Signs of Progress – What's Improved since 2013?

- More naturalized shorelines
- Increased native plant buffers
- Growing awareness of shoreline health

Photo Credit: Kit Muma



# Next Steps: Bring the Natural Edge to your Property

Plant Native  
Trees, Shrubs & Wildflowers

Start or expand your riparian buffer!





# The Natural Edge Program

## Step 1: Site Visit

- We take photos, measurements, and notes.

## Step 2: Planting Plan

- We create a custom planting plan on site. Requires your approval.

## Step 3: Planting

- You pick up your Natural Edge Starter Kit and plant your shoreline!





# The Natural Edge Program

Free site visit: advice and recommendations are provided to improve the health of shoreline properties

If planting is recommended, for \$395 landowners receive

- Customized re-naturalization planting plan for the property
- 50 native plants including 25 bare root (small), 15 potted (large) plants and 10 wildflowers.
  - \* Additional plants can be purchased at cost.
- 40 Hemp fibre pads
- Tree guards for all deciduous trees
- Mulch for wildflowers
- Educational guides

Staff can complete the planting at a cost: \$7 per plant







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[Lajoie@watersheds.ca](mailto:Lajoie@watersheds.ca)



**Melissa Dakers**  
**Habitat & Stewardship Program Manager**  
[dakers@watersheds.ca](mailto:dakers@watersheds.ca)

**Thank You!**

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