



*Are You Dreaming
of Clear Fresh Lake Water and Great Fishing?*

Take the Quiz!

(Click the link)

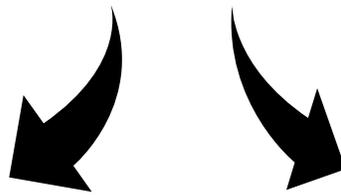
To Rate Your Lakeshore

4 Questions, 3 minutes

Become a Lake Steward

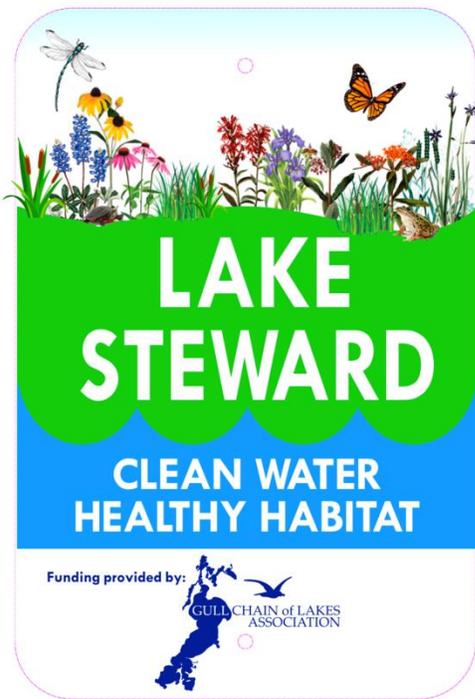
And Make Gull Chain Water Quality Sustainable

Why Will GCOLA Lake Steward Bring Results?



Everyone Benefits

It's Doable!



Everyone Benefits

Clean Water, Healthy Habitat helps the fish, plants and animals in our lake and watershed. But it helps us humans, too. We crave the sound of birds singing, the call of loons, the sight of butterflies and dragonflies, the feel of lake water, or the tug of a sunfish on our fishing line. And by the way, the better the water quality, the greater the value of your lakeshore home, an asset for your children and grandchildren.

It's Doable!

Nutrients and silt coming from shoreline properties are gradually leading us toward impairment of the Gull Chain of Lakes. But we know exactly how much that excess nutrient load is, and how much each of us may be contributing (enough to grow 100 pounds of algae per 100 ft of shoreline per year, see details below). If lakeshore owners Act Now to mow less, grow buffer zones of native plants and stop fertilizing, simple actions that actually save money and effort, we would approach sustainability for Clean Water, Healthy Habitat, and preserve the value of our lakes for generations.

Let's Do It! [Take the Quiz!](#)



To Become a Lake Steward...

1. [Take the Quiz!](#) to rate your lakeshore, 4 questions that take 3 minutes to complete. Click the link, and please leave an email address, so that we know it is you. GCOLA membership is not required, everyone is welcome!
2. We will offer to visit your property. You do not need to be home if we have your permission to walk the grounds; it usually takes 15 or 20 minutes.
3. You will either receive the Lake Steward Award, a beautiful sign for the end of the dock, or we can help you qualify. The sign inspires others to become Lake Stewards, too.
4. GCOLA Lake Steward has **funding for shoreline projects** that help reach Lake Steward goals for improving water quality and habitat. [Take the Quiz!](#), and leave a question or comment for us, or email us at lakesteward@gcola.org.



How Does Lake Steward Work? A Simple Idea

Lake Steward comes from a simple idea: to **Do More** for our lakes and ~~lake~~ water quality, **Do Less**: less mowing, less fertilizing and less application of pesticides. “Clean” monoculture lawns, mowing and trimming mean that there are no native plants to absorb nutrient and silt runoff from the land, and literally tons of algae, impairment of loon habitat and the promotion of invasive species are the result. **Letting native plants grow** in the water, along the shoreline as a buffer zone to absorb nutrient pollution from runoff, and in the upland zone away from the lake **saves money and effort** while it protects our lakes and wildlife habitat.

Why would lakeshore owners spend money and effort to do things that harm the lakes and their own asset, their lakeshore property? Because owners are trying to do the right thing, and neat and tidy lawns are admired and expected.... even *demand*ed by our associations and cities. But lakeshore is different. Minnesota state law, the Shoreland Management Act, describes what is needed to keep our lakes healthy: if the land is still natural, do everything possible to keep it that way, or if not, add buffer zones and native trees and plants. When awardees display the colorful Lake Steward sign, others can admire and aspire to having beautiful natural shoreland that leads us to a brighter future for our lakes.