



# Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Management Group

130 Southgate Drive  
Aitkin, MN 56431

[www.millelacswatershed.org](http://www.millelacswatershed.org)  
218-927-6565

## TOPIC OF THE MONTH - FEBRUARY 2016

### Addressing the Needs of the Mille Lacs Lake Watershed

Over the years we, as Minnesotans, commonly focus on what Mille Lacs Lake Watershed can provide us. It's time we give back consciously to a watershed that brings more than economic and societal values to the community. Located just two hours north of the Twin Cities is 132,516 acres of that host a vast array of seasonal opportunities to all age groups. Something often times overlooked is how we support the lake ecologically through our actions off the lake.



A “watershed” is an area of land in which waters drain downslope, along a drainage to a common lowest point or basin. In this case Mille Lacs Lake. The take-home message here is knowing that everyone is located within a watershed and actions taken off the lake are just as important as the actions taken on lake.

Taking a closer look into the Mille Lacs Lake watershed, we can identify that Mille Lacs Lake sediment core results have revealed a 30% increase in phosphorus accumulation during the past 50 years. That increase has dramatic impacts on the health of the lake, with excessive nutrient loading we often see things like more algae blooms, decreasing dissolved oxygen, loss of native fish species, an increase in aquatic invasive species plants. A fish that is under stress caused by low oxygen levels in the water is more susceptible to insecticides or heavy metals.

One of the driving factors to changes in water chemistry coincides with the land use and land cover. Surface runoff of fertilizers, salts, heavy metals, and herbicides can all have a dramatic effect on the health of a lake. Some things you can do to reduce or mitigate runoff are ensuring there is enough healthy vegetative cover around your lakeshore, rivers, and streams that deliver water indirectly or directly to Mille Lacs Lake.

If you feel your land adjacent to a stream, ditch, or lake lacks quality rooting vegetation to protect your land from erosion, don't hesitate to contact Lynn Gallice at (320) 983-2160 or Janet Smude at (218) 927-6565 to help address your concerns. A local resource professional can provide technical help for no cost at all, and may even be able to provide financial assistance.



Provided by Mitchell Lundeen, SWCD North Region Forester