



Sustainable Lake Living

Living on the lake is filled with rewards and responsibilities.

Listening to the chirping birds, watching the glistening water roll into the shoreline and, smelling the clean, fresh air are some of the many benefits of lakeside living. But, along with the rewards comes the responsibility of being a good steward of these gifts. Protecting and preserving our natural environment is a forever process. Every day we act in ways that either protect and preserve the beauty and integrity of the natural environment or promote its slow decline and destruction. The solution lies in *sustainable* lakeside living.

Every lakeside dweller can make a positive difference to the environment by making simple lifestyle changes and encouraging family, friends and neighbors to do the same. It's our environment, our health and our safety that is at stake if we don't wake up and work together. Your lakeside home is a retreat and a refuge. It is a place to enjoy life, savor relationships with family and friends. Lakeside dwellers have an opportunity to maximize the natural environment in making their home a peaceful, healthy, sustainable environment. We have all heard the message-reuse, reduce and recycle. Here are some easy ways for lakeside living lifestyle changes that can make a difference.

- Keep your shoreline free of clutter. Don't dump chemicals, soaps, etc in the water.
- Don't run your sump pump hose into the lake or river or stream.
- Make the most of runoff water to grow your plants-plant a rain garden.
- Lawn care-use organic fertilizers and weed control
- Plant native species that require less water. Native plants attract birds and butterflies and require less water.

- Buy a rain barrel and use the water for your garden. Did you know that a rain barrel on a 2000 sq ft home can capture as much as 36,000 gallons of water a year?
- Plant a kitchen garden for herbs, vegetables.
- Increase the biodiversity of your yard by planting tall trees, small trees, bushes and plants.
- Make your yard a pesticide-free haven for birds. Get your grandchildren interested in bird watching. Hang up a bird feeder, build a bird house.
- Use the contours of your lake property to your advantage by landscaping for water efficiency with rain gardens, ponds and native plants that require less water.
- If possible, use porous surfaces for parking vehicles and walking paths.
- Use a broom or a rake instead of a leaf-blower. It saves on energy and it is QUIET.
- Replace parts of your lawn with no mow grass or groundcovers.
- Mulch around plants to cut down on evaporation.
- Plant trees that can provide shade and lower your energy costs.
- Water plants only in the early evening or early morning hours. Did you know that 32% of residential outdoor water is used for lawn care-this comes to almost 8 billion gallons of water a day in the US? Your sprinkler uses 264 gallons of water an hour.
- Buy a clothes line and use it.
- Slow down and enjoy life. Have a cup of coffee in the morning in your lakeside chair and just listen to the sounds around you.
- Build a wooden swing set, hang a tire swing, build a sand box and find space in your yard for active children to play.
- Encourage lawn games like croquet, volleyball, bocce ball, washers, etc. that are gentle on the environment.
- Encourage composting.
- Don't burn near the lake, as the ashes will float into the lake.
- Use non-toxic materials to paint your dock or floating rafts.
- Don't litter in the lake. Pick up the clutter that sometimes washes ashore from others.
- Spend time floating in your boat instead of puttering up and down the shoreline.

- Decorate your lake home in an earth-friendly manner. Use natural materials like bamboo, cotton, linen, wicker, rattan and canvas. Buy from second-hand shops. Find unique ways to recycle materials.
- Cover your outdoor furniture when not in use to save on cleaning chores.
- Save energy by using solar-powered outside lights. Install compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- Turn off machines, lights, computers, and other electrical equipment when not in use.
- Grill out more often.
- Use your deck and patio as an outdoor room, weather – permitting.
- Find natural alternatives to insect repellants.



Lakeside living is a privilege. Watching fishermen land a fish, watching the pelicans fly by, watching small children explore bugs crawling and waves crashing on the shoreline, looking for sea shells and minnows swimming in the water, listening to the breeze in the trees-so many treats and treasured moments. It's worth preserving and protecting.