



What's Lake Wise?

The Lake Wise Program is an Agency of Natural Resources initiative that awards lake-friendly shoreland property, including that of state parks, town beaches, private homes and businesses.



Program Goal

The goal of Lake Wise is to establish a new normal, a new culture of lakeshore landscaping that is proven to help protect the lake. A property that earns the Lake Wise Award will represent a “model” shoreland property. The Lake Wise Award certifies a property is well managed, using shoreland Best Management Practices, and is maintained to care for the lake.

Why Lake Wise?

Recent Vermont lake science from the [National Lake Assessment study](#) shows that Vermont ranked lowest in the north east ecoregion and in the nation for degraded shallow water habitat. Vermont's degraded conditions for aquatic habitat is directly related to harmful impacts from lakeshore development. The Lake Wise Program aims to inform, teach, and change the current lakeshore development practices from clearing shores and building sea walls to practices that are more lake friendly and known to effectively protect the lake. Through Lake Wise, participants receive technical assistance for fixing erosion, dirty runoff problems, and diminished shoreland vegetation which will protect lake quality and wildlife habitat.

Lake Wise is based on social science research that shows people are most influenced by their neighbors - *monkey see, monkey do*. So by using the beautiful Lake Wise Award sign to show case lake friendly properties, others along the shore will be inspired to make improvements and changes so they too can earn the Award and help protect their lake. Lake Wise is modeled after Maine's successful social marketing program called [Lake Smart](#), which has inspired many lakeshore owners in the Belgrade and Rangely Lake Districts as well as throughout the state (Maine has over 6000 lakes) to use lakeshore best management practices for shoreland development. Similar to the results of Maine's Lake Smart Program, Vermont lakeshore owners earning the Lake Wise Award will help create a movement towards more lake friendly living around Vermont lakes, thereby greatly improving protection for wildlife habitat and lake water quality.

Technical Assistance

The Lake Wise Program offers technical assistance to shoreland property owners who want to learn more about making their property as lake friendly as possible. Take advantage of free technical assistance through the Lake Wise Program and have your shoreland property assessed for controlling runoff and preventing erosion. The Lake Wise Program offers solutions - [Best Management Practices](#) - for managing shoreland property and making it lake-friendly for all.



Participation

If you are a lakeshore owner and think you are or would like to become Lake Wise eligible, then just [contact](#) the Lake Wise Program. Or, if you have a question about how to encourage others around your lake or members of your lake association to participate in the Lake Wise Program, then contact us so we can help support you. Any lakeshore owner can participate in the Lake Wise Program, including state parks, town beaches, private homes and businesses.

To Earn the Lake Wise Award a property is evaluated in four categories: Shoreland; Recreation Area; Driveway; Septic and Structure. If a property has excellent stormwater runoff practices, but no native shoreland vegetation, then it may earn a Lake Wise Certificate, but not the full Award sign. Passing two of the four categories earns a Certificate, but to post an Award sign that show cases a property as a model for lake friendly living, the property must pass all four categories. A property must have a functioning septic system to pass as well as this would be a “show stopper” from receiving the Award sign.

Lake Associations or lake groups with 15 percent Awarded participation in the Lake Wise Program will receive the Gold Lake Wise Award. Marketing research shows that once 15 percent of a set population partakes in a similar action, a trend is set, and others will be attracted to follow the same actions. The Gold Lake Wise Award is an impressive accomplishment for a lake community, and lake residents living on such a lake should take tremendous pride in their actions to keep their lake clean and healthy now and forever.

Lake Wise Leaders

Lake Wise Leaders serve as the local, volunteer Lake Wise contact. The Leader’s job is to encourage shoreland owners to follow the Lake Wise BMPs and ultimately earn the Lake Wise Award. Lake Wise Leaders conduct preliminary assessments of anyone’s shoreland property to advise them on what needs to be done, if anything, before the official Lake Wise Evaluator is called out to assess the property. Contact us if you would like to serve as the Lake Wise Leader for your lake.

Lake Wise Evaluators

- Lake Wise Evaluators have a background in natural resources management, including managing stormwater runoff and protecting wildlife habitat.
- All Evaluators use the same methods and impartiality for each assessment.
- Evaluators spend up to one and half hours assessing and providing technical advice on each property. Properties are evaluated according to the Lake Wise criteria for *shore*; *recreation area*; *driveway*; and *structure* and *septic*. If all the appropriate shoreland Best Management Practices are in place, then the property earns the Lake Wise Award, otherwise, the Evaluator gives the landowner a copy of recommendations for how to become Lake Wise certified in the future. Landowners have up to three years to make the improvements and to be assessed a second time for earning the Lake Wise Award, after which time, a whole new evaluation would need to be done.



Lake Wise Award Sign

Lake Wise participants managing their shores with good practices in the four categories of driveway; structures and septic systems; recreation areas; and shorefront will receive the Lake Wise Award and Beautiful Sign. This sign can be proudly displayed on model lake friendly properties.



Lake Wise Award Informational Sign

Informational Lake Wise signs get posted at public areas around the lake to alert others on what the Award sign represents and to look for them on lakeshore properties. Lake Associations are awarded the "Gold Award," depending on the percentage of shoreland owners participating in Lake Wise.



Lake Wise Logo Design

By Ann Linde, Shooting Star Designs

Ann methodically considered all aspects and benefits of a healthy, natural shore. She then crafted the lovely Lake Wise logo depicting a lake friendly property.

Lake Wise Award



Lake Friendly Living

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
www.anr.state.vt.us

For the Good of the Lake

Please join efforts to protect lakes by making your property **Lake Wise**. Look for the Lake Wise Award sign on model lake friendly properties.



For more information, contact an award recipient or the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

www.anr.state.vt.us