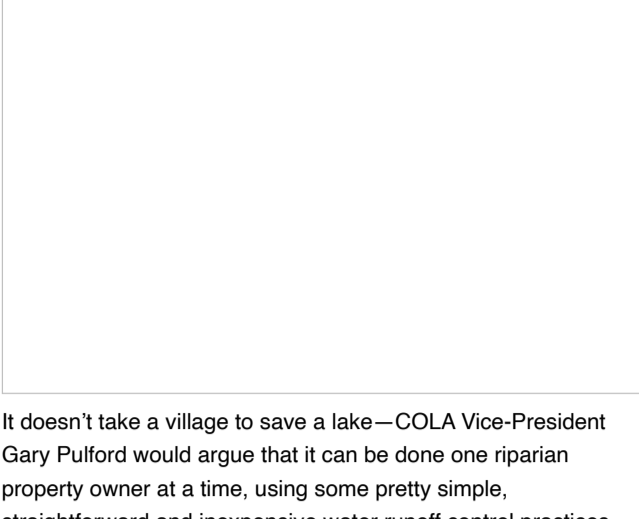


Shoreland Residential Water Management 101: Introduction to saving your lake

By Kathy Hanson
Contributing Writer

Photos by Tom Burgess and Kathy Hanson



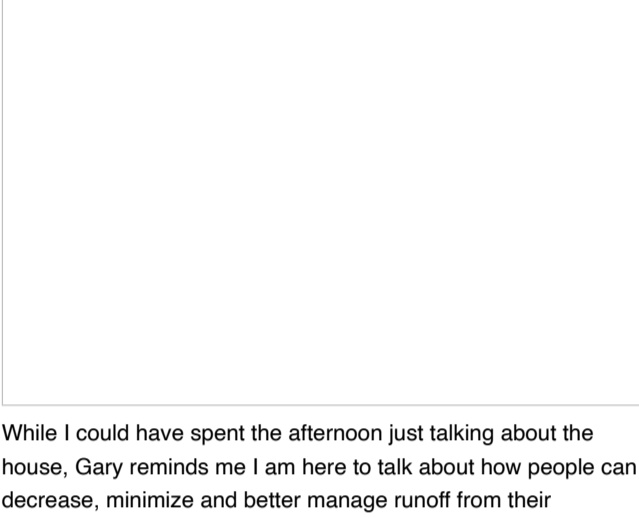
It doesn't take a village to save a lake—COLA Vice-President Gary Pulford would argue that it can be done one riparian property owner at a time, using some pretty simple, straightforward and inexpensive water runoff control practices.

On a recent unusually warm, sunny and windy April Sunday, Pulford and his wife Linda gave me a tour of their one and one-half acre lot situated on Musky Bay, one of the most impacted and "impaired" areas of Lac Courte Oreilles.

Two and a half years ago the Pulfords built their new dream retirement home here. It is a gray-sided, white-trimmed, multi-level, modified A- frame structure with clean lines. Gary said it was "designed to minimize the roof impervious surface and maximize passive solar heating." It faces due south, with inviting porches hugging both sides of the house. From their living room window, I thought it had an almost ocean-like view: the house is 300 feet from the water with a steep bluff allowed to grow just as it was meant to—without intervention or prodding by humankind. Nature requires no such assistance.



Linda has decorated the interior of the home in earth colors, with a natural stone fireplace and local art on the walls.



While I could have spent the afternoon just talking about the house, Gary reminds me I am here to talk about how people can decrease, minimize and better manage runoff from their impervious surfaces so rain and snow melt runoff will not rush directly into the lake.

Impervious surfaces are mainly artificial structures and materials that make up driveways, patios, roofs (home, garage, tool shed, etc.), sidewalks or any walking areas. They are often covered with solid and impermeable materials such as concrete, asphalt, brick, stone and rooftops. Even compacted soils can be impervious.

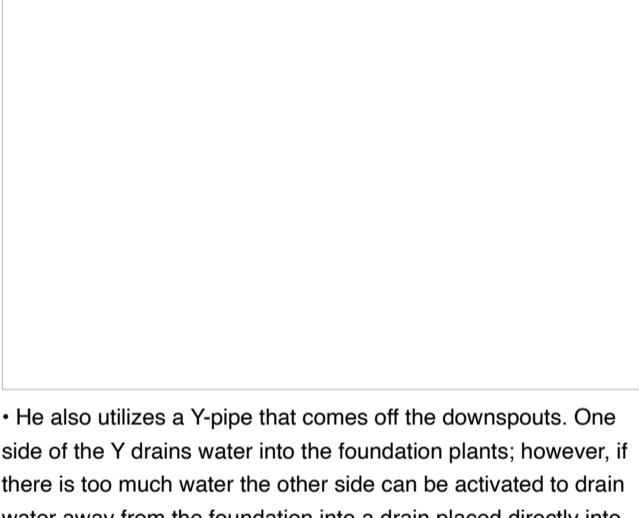
Pulford said the closer to the lake any of these surfaces are, the greater the runoff to the lake—"it goes straight in," he said, adding that concrete and asphalt are the worst.

"There is a Sawyer County Shoreland Zoning ordinance that limits the amount of impervious surface to 15 percent of your total square footage of your property," Pulford explains.

Pulford is a former program manager with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and while he is in possession of experience and knowledge far beyond that of most lake property owners, he maintains everyone can make a big difference. He outlined his best practices:

- When building, minimize the roof surface. Pulford built the structure up; it is not a sprawling lake house. Their home is close to 4,000 square feet but their house total roof surface is only 32' by 48.' Linda also added the they used nothing but R-50 in their roof insulation.

- Use plants everywhere, especially around the house and other buildings. Pulford has his whole house guttered, with downspouts attached to drainpipe buried into the ground so the water goes underground and waters all the perennials and foundation plantings. He and Linda have between 10-11,000 hostas in their gardens, he said.



- He also utilizes a Y-pipe that comes off the downspouts. One side of the Y drains water into the foundation plants; however, if there is too much water the other side can be activated to drain water away from the foundation into a drain placed directly into the ground away from the house. There are other path diversions for diverting water across a pathway or driveway at intervals using pipes or channels that can also be used.

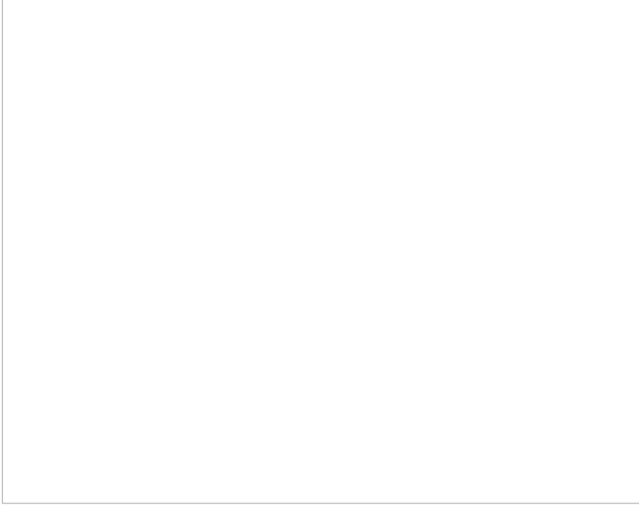
- Minimize lawn and grass areas. It goes without saying that fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals from gardens and lawns are some of the lake's biggest pollutants. If people must use them, use them sparingly and never before a rainstorm. "If you like plants, use them," said Pulford. Plants are the best option because they absorb and transpire enormous quantities of runoff water— and they're beautiful.

- The Pulford driveway is ¾-inch rock, with sand underneath so water can soak in, not run off. It is simple and inexpensive, Pulford said, adding that especially asphalt should be avoided.

- Where the Pulford property abuts the asphalt road (Victory Heights Circle), Pulford has placed large rocks and backfilled the slope to inhibit the flow of water coming off their property and going down the asphalt road into the lake.



- Around other buildings, Pulford has used landscape fabric followed by eight inches of rock around the foundation. Again, there are lots of plants, so the water goes to the plants and stays there, instead of running down to the lake.

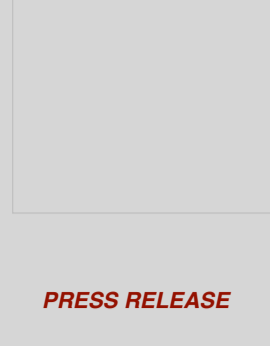


- Rain barrels capture water from a rain gutter downspout and can also be used for watering gardens and potted plants. Cover the barrels to prevent mosquitoes from laying eggs.

- Shoreline buffers are areas of native trees, shrubs and groundcovers planted 35 feet inland. They help keep the lake water clean and hold soil in place. Pulford cautioned, however, that shoreline buffers are only part of an overall shoreland residential water management system (See Short Ears, Long Tales Issue #3, June 24, 2015.)

None of these practices for managing shoreland is complex, Pulford wants to emphasize. "The whole idea is to get water back into the ground as soon as possible."

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Kathy Hanson is a free-lance reporter for the Sawyer County Gazette, the Sawyer County Field Editor for Our Wisconsin magazine, and Copy Editor for the Bayfield County Journal. She has also served as Staff Reporter, Business Feature Writer, Columnist, and Copy Editor for the Sawyer County Record.



PRESS RELEASE

[Wisconsin DNR Asked to Initiate Emergency Rulemaking for Lac Courte Oreilles](#)

See related article in the Wisconsin State Journal, Sunday, April 17, 2016

["Fixes Come Slowly for Growing List of Impaired Lakes and Streams"](#)

OTHER NEWS

COLA's proposal to WDNR for reducing phosphorus level in LCO to 10 parts per billion: [Site Specific Phosphorus Criterion Proposal for Lac Courte Oreilles](#)

How quickly does phosphorus entering just one part of LCO mix with and affect the lake as a whole? See video - [Hydrodynamic Mixing Model of LCO](#)

COLA Annual Meeting

Saturday, June 25, 2016
St. Francis Solanis
Mission Church

Schedule

8:30 - 9 Coffee & rolls

9 - 9:45 COLA business meeting

10 - Noon COLA informational meeting.

Speakers to include

[Hans Holmberg](#)
LimnoTech

[Max Wolter](#)
WDNR Fishery Biologist

[Tressie Kamp](#)
Midwest Environmental Advocates

COLA Summer Picnic

Saturday, July 16, 2016
Noon - 3:00 pm
Bass Lake Town Hall

4rd Annual COLA Charity Golf Tournament

Sponsored by: Lac Courte Oreilles Foundation and Courte Oreilles Lakes Association

September 17, 2016
More details to follow

HELP NEEDED

[Join the COLA Board!](#)

COLA's Treasurer, Steve Lillyblad, will be retiring soon. Are you willing to help out? Requirements: Basic computer skills, some familiarity with spreadsheet software, and a commitment to the well-being of LCO.

COLA is also recruiting two other board positions, one focusing on forestry practices and the other on watershed outreach.

Send inquires to [COLA](#)

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We'd like to spread the news of COLA's good people and good works throughout the upper Couderay River watershed. If you have friends or family on nearby lakes who would enjoy Short Ears Long Tales, [let us know](#).

Help COLA - Like us on [Facebook](#) & share COLA's posts.

Support COLA by contributing to the [Lac Courte Oreilles Foundation](#).

Are your neighbors and extended family members of COLA? If not, please ask them to [join](#).

[Archived issues of Short Ears, Long Tales](#)

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COLA Mission: 1) to protect, preserve and enhance the quality of Lac Courte Oreilles and Little Lac Courte Oreilles, their shorelands and surrounding areas, while respecting the interests of property owners and the rights of the general public; and 2) to consider, study, survey and respond to issues deemed relevant by COLA's membership.

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