

Top 10 Actions You Can Take to Protect Your Local Freshwater!

Protect your local freshwater this World Water Day, March 22, 2022, and beyond! Watersheds Canada has created this printable list of the top 10 actions you can take to protect your local freshwater areas.



1. USE NON-TOXIC CLEANING PRODUCTS

Many household cleaning products can be harmful to your health and the environment. When we wash cleaning products with toxic materials down the drain, it can cause water pollution, algal blooms, and harm aquatic wildlife. Switch to non-toxic cleaning products to reduce your impact on freshwater!



2. FIX LEAKY FAUCETS

A leaky tap that drips once per second can waste 10,000 litres of water in one year, and can cost you a lot of money. Look for leaks in your home by checking your water meter before and after a two hour period when no water is being used. If the meter changes, you probably have a leak.



3. PROPERLY DISPOSE OF MEDICATIONS

Never flush expired or unwanted medicine down the drain or toilet. Research shows that pharmaceutical pollution has a big impact on aquatic life. Medications containing hormones can alter fish genes and disrupt their behaviour and reproduction cycles. Make sure to properly dispose of all medications at a pharmacy.





Photo: Canva

4. AVOID DETERGENT PODS

Despite their convenience, dishwasher and laundry detergent pods contain harmful chemicals that impact the environment. When the pods are immersed in water, they turn into a liquid plastic solution. This plastic solution can easily pass through conventional water treatment and can even enter groundwater resources, water systems, and the food chain. Protect water systems and drinking water by avoiding detergents that are sold in pod form.



Photo: Ruggiero Scardiano

5. BUY CLOTHING MADE FROM NATURAL FIBRES OR INSTALL A MICROPLASTIC FILTER ON YOUR WASHING MACHINE

Every time you wash a load of laundry, anywhere from a few hundred thousand to millions of microfibrils come off of the fabrics. Clothing and textiles made of synthetic materials, such as polyester, nylon, and fleece, shed microplastics in the form of fibres. From the washing machine, they enter our wastewater, eventually ending up in the environment. When possible, purchase clothing that is made from natural fibres, such as cotton or wool, in order to reduce microplastic pollution in our waterways. Also, researchers have found that microfibre-catching filters can also be an effective solution to stop microplastics from entering the environment.



Photo: Canva

6. REDUCE SALT USE ON WALKWAYS

The use of road and sidewalk salt puts stress on water bodies, plants, and animals. Reduce your impact on freshwater by using less salt on your property in the winter. Using alternative materials, such as sand or wood ash, can create traction on ice with less strain on the environment.

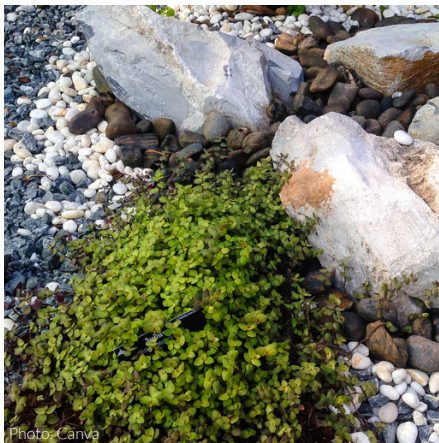


Photo: Dragan Babovic



7. TAKE CARE OF YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

If you have a septic system, make sure it is used properly and well maintained. Septic systems can impact local drinking water wells or surface water bodies - a failed septic system can lead to adding nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen) in surface water. This may lead to a heightened growth of bacteria and algae in the water.



8. EXPERIMENT WITH WATER-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING

Imagine never needing to mow or water your lawn again! There are many earth alternatives to traditional grass lawns, such as no-mow lawns, low maintenance gardens, or xeriscape gardens that require minimal irrigation. These options often use rocks, stone gravel, and native plants rather than grass, and they absorb rainwater which leads to less runoff.



9. INVEST IN A RAIN BARREL

Installing a rain barrel can capture and store rainwater draining from your roof. Rain barrels conserve water that can be used for gardening or watering your lawn. Capturing rainwater prevents runoff from picking up soil, oil, pesticides, fertilizers, and other contaminants and washing them into the sewer system. Using a rain barrel also cuts down on your water bill!



10. HELP WITH A COMMUNITY CLEANUP

Take action by cleaning up the areas around your water bodies. You will have a positive effect on the wildlife and water quality, while creating space for outdoor recreation. Your efforts will make an impact for years to come!

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