



Lake Star Notes

City of Norfolk
Department of Utilities

Winter 2015

Dear Lake Star Resident:

Everywhere we look in Hampton Roads we see water—lakes, ponds, the Chesapeake Bay, the Elizabeth River and the Lafayette River, to name a few. The area you live in is near Lake Whitehurst, one of the City of Norfolk’s drinking water reservoirs. To make sure we have enough clean water for future generations and a healthy environment, we need to protect nature and control pollution.

By working together we can make a difference. I look forward to working with you to make sure we have clean water.

If you have any questions I can be reached at (757) 441-5678 or by email at david.rosenthal@norfolk.gov.

Sincerely,

David S. Rosenthal, CLM
Reservoir Manager
City of Norfolk
Department of Utilities



For More Information

Become a Lake Star
www.norfolk.gov/LSH

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A Lake is....?

Defined simply, a lake is a depression in the ground filled with water that drains from the surrounding land. However, in Virginia there are only two naturally formed lakes—Lake Drummond and Mountain Lake. The other “lakes” are man-made and have been created by digging a hole or constructing a dam. Lake Whitehurst along with the City’s other reservoirs in Norfolk and Virginia Beach were created by placing a dam along what is now Shore Drive in the late 1890s. All of the reservoirs are tributaries to the Chesapeake Bay.

Regardless of how the lake came about, a lake is much more complex than a depression in the ground filled with water. A lake is....

A Home for Wildlife—Plants, fish, mussels, insects, fungi, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals all reside in or near lakes.

A Haven for Threatened and Endangered Species—Twenty percent of the world’s freshwater fish are threatened, endangered or have become extinct in recent decades. In North America, freshwater animals are dying out five times faster than species on land.

Fragile Ecosystems—Of all the ecosystems on earth, freshwater lakes are considered some of the most sensitive and they contain the greatest concentration of plant and animal species.

Necessity for Human Life—Lakes supply people throughout the world with food, livelihoods, recreation—and, of course, water to drink.



Healthy Lake? Frogs can tell

In the past 20 years, scientists have seen a decline among amphibians like frogs and salamanders. Research suggests habitat destruction and exposure to chemicals as causes. Amphibians, which breathe through their skin, are pollution-sensitive and often the first affected by environmental changes.



I like my lawn...

I like my lawn and as long as I keep it mowed and neatly trimmed it let's my neighbors know that I care about my property. But is a pretty, green lawn the best way to care for the reservoir?

The best way to care for the reservoir and other local waterways is to reduce the amount of grass you have by planting trees, bushes and other plants. By replacing grass with plants, you will not only have less lawn to mow, but you will also use less fertilizer (if needed). This will also add beauty to your property and protect the reservoir by reducing the pollutants that run off of your property into the storm drain system or into the lake.

If you live near the reservoir and have grass up to the water's edge, replace the grass with native plants that like

to get their "feet" wet and also add habitat and color. You can arrange your plantings so that you still have a wonderful view of the water while enjoying the color and beauty of the plants. This also reduces the amount of pollutants entering the reservoir.

You might also consider planting a Rain Garden. Rain gardens have many benefits:

- enhance the beauty of your yard
- diversify the plants in your yard
- provide habitat for birds and insects
- filter stormwater runoff before it enters local waterways

For more information visit www.norfolk.gov/LSH or www.AskHRGreen.org



GOOD to DO

Grow Green—Reduce Fertilizer Use

Fertilizer that runs off of lawns and into lakes can lead to algae blooms and cause other harmful vegetation overgrowth in water. Please use fertilizer sparingly. Your lawn may need much less fertilizer than you think. Before adding anything to your lawn, *get a soil test*. They are simple and inexpensive. Visit www.norfolk.gov/BSH or contact your local Cooperative Extension Office for more information on soil test kits.

Use a low or no-phosphorus fertilizer formula. Typical Virginia soils have enough phosphorus to support a healthy lawn. Also, look for a low phosphorus-to-nitrogen ratio. A high percentage of the nitrogen should be water insoluble. This means that the fertilizer contin-

ues to release slowly despite the presence of water. Even if it washes into the reservoir, it does not become immediately available to plant life.

Fertilizer analysis is often described by using three numbers, such as 12-4-8 or 46-0-0. These three numbers indicate, respectively, the percentage of weight of nitrogen (N), phosphate (P_2O_3), and potash (K_2O) in the fertilizer. Also, the ratio of these numbers is important. If the fertilizer analysis is 16-4-8, the fertilizer ratio is 4-1-2; similarly, a 14-7-14 analysis would have a 2-1-2 ratio. Mature lawns generally require more nitrogen than phosphorus and potassium; therefore, ratios of 4-1-2 and 4-1-3 are appropriate.