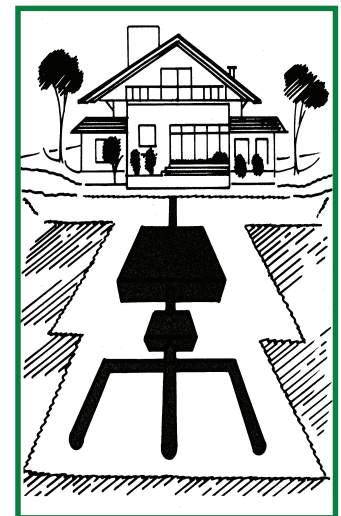


Protect Georgetown's **Waters & Wetlands!** *Use Household Best Management Practices!!*

A variety of everyday Household Best Management Practices (BMPs) can be used by Georgetown residents to help protect the quality of our ground and surface waters, including the [Parker River](#) and [Rock & Pentucket Ponds](#), our primary recreational water bodies. These household practices include:

Maintain Septic Systems in Good Working Order

- Improperly maintained septic systems pose a threat to our family's and neighbors' health and to the environment by releasing inadequately-treated sewage (bacteria, viruses, nutrients) onto the ground surface or into nearby waterways, such as the tributary streams that feed into [Rock & Pentucket Ponds](#).
- Watershed residents should look for warning signs of a failing septic system (slow draining toilets, sewage odors around the property or in nearby storm drains, sewage effluent ponding over the leach field, sewage back-ups in the house). Such problems should be attended to at once by a certified septic contractor.
- Residents should: have their septic systems inspected and pumped regularly (every 3–5 years); avoid using garbage grinders; refrain from pouring hazardous chemicals or non-biodegradable products down the drain; practice water conservation by using low flow showerheads and toilets and by minimizing outdoor watering (especially during mid-day hours when much of the water evaporates away!)



Minimize Fertilizer Use

- Fertilizers contain nitrates and phosphates, which stimulate the growth of aquatic vegetation, and also cause nuisance algae blooms that can lead to fish kills. If possible, watershed residents should avoid fertilizing their lawns.
- Mulching or other organic gardening methods can be used to achieve the desired fertilization results; if fertilizer is required, watershed residents should choose one that contains no phosphorus.
- Fertilizer application should be avoided during the summer and fall. Turf grass demand for nutrients is low at this time and unused fertilizer is more likely to end up in sensitive watershed streams.
- Over-application of fertilizers should also be avoided. Watershed residents should have their soil tested to determine what additional nutrients, if any, are actually needed.

Minimize the Use of Pesticides, Herbicides, and Insecticides

- Many household products made to exterminate pests are also toxic to humans, pets, wildlife, fish, small aquatic organisms, and plants.
- Natural pest control methods should be used whenever possible. If pesticides and herbicides are required, watershed residents should read the labels carefully to determine the correct application amounts. Lawn chemicals should not be applied just before it rains – **they can wash off into our streams and wetlands!!!**



Minimize Impermeable Surfaces

- Watershed residents should limit areas of impervious surfaces, such as paved driveways, patios, and parking lots.
- Permeable stone and gravel, instead of concrete or asphalt, will allow for increased infiltration of stormwater.

Maintain Slope Stability

- Watershed residents can stabilize slopes on their property with deep-rooted vegetation that enhances storm water infiltration and reduces erosion.

- Steep slopes can also be broken up with retaining walls and terraces.
- For those with property frontage on ponds, fixed shoreline bulkheads and retaining walls can be replaced with native vegetation to stabilize banks. [Shoreline bulkheads and walls tend to deflect waves from boats and storms and concentrate the wave energy. These waves then direct their force on unprotected banks, causing even greater bank undercutting and erosion. Native grass and shrub vegetation buffers along the shore help to absorb and dissipate wave energy as well as hold the soil in place.]

Use Low Maintenance Landscaping Techniques

- Native vegetation requires less watering and fewer chemical additives, such as fertilizers and pesticides, to encourage and maintain healthy growth.
- Watershed residents should establish the smallest lawn that still satisfies their recreational and aesthetic needs.
- Native sedges, wildflower meadows, and gardens can be used as beneficial alternatives to lawn.



Control Stormwater Runoff On-Site

- Rainfall runoff should be directed into a garden or a vegetated swale to slow the flow of water and increase infiltration.
- Planting deep-rooted vegetation, such as dogwood trees, will increase absorption of stormwater.
- Maintaining or restoring vegetated riparian buffers along the edge of watershed streams and ponds will decrease stormwater runoff velocities and allow natural pollutant attenuation through the vegetation.
- All soil surfaces should be kept either vegetated or mulched to encourage infiltration and reduce erosion. During construction, install silt fences, hay bales, and/or geotextile fabrics to stabilize and retain soil on-site. Following construction, re-vegetate bare soil surfaces as quickly as possible.
- Downspouts from roof gutters should be aimed away from foundations and paved surfaces and directed toward vegetated areas (or into a rain barrel for later use in watering lawns and gardens!)
- For roofs without gutters, residents should plant grass, spread mulch, or place gravel under the drip line to prevent soil erosion and increase the ground's capacity to absorb water.

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