

At the Annual Meeting of the Lake Management District of Powers Lake on August 4th 2000, it was voted almost unanimously to acquire 72 acres of wetlands that feed the inlet of the lake. This will make it possible to control the watershed at that point of the lake. There are still 200 plus acres remaining in this wetland complex, but this was a key piece that contained some possibly developable upland sites.

We are all aware of the danger of farm runoff, however, we may be our own worst enemy. There are almost 300 lake front status lawns on Powers Lake in addition to these are the many off-lake neighbors that are also in the watershed. The application of chemicals to these lawns may actually be contributing more pollutants to our lake than the surrounding farms. As Pogo said, "We have seen the enemy – and he is us."

All chemicals – fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides – applied to the lawns around the lake are creating increasing problems for our lake. Most of these chemicals make their way into the lake or groundwater and springs that feed the lake. These pollutants also contaminate our drinking water sources.

If independent soil testing (available through the UW Extension) shows that your lawn would benefit from application of nutrients, please follow the soil scientist's recommendations – not what a commercial product or applicator says. Use only the necessary nutrients in the amounts suggested, because in the case of fertilizer, more is definitely not better. If you use the nutrient rich lake water to water your lawn and plants you are fertilizing naturally.

Remember this is your lake getaway, not another suburban yard. It is supposed to be more natural, less groomed, lower maintenance. Think of the idyllic Northwoods lake experience – did it contain a groomed lawn? Why are the Northwoods lakes so appealing? Maybe because nature has not been suburbanized? Try planting more ground cover and perennials which will stabilize the soil with deep root systems and cut down on lawn mowing. This may not win you the Groomed Lawn of the Year Award, but it will certainly make for a healthier lake ecosystem.

Summary

- Excess fertilizers feed the lake plants, upsetting the natural balance.
- Herbicides kill the beneficial vegetation in the lake. Some lake plants are necessary - --they stabilize the lake bottom, use nutrients to keep algae growth down, provide a food source, provide habitat for fish.
- Pesticides kill the microorganisms and beneficial insects in the ecosystem.