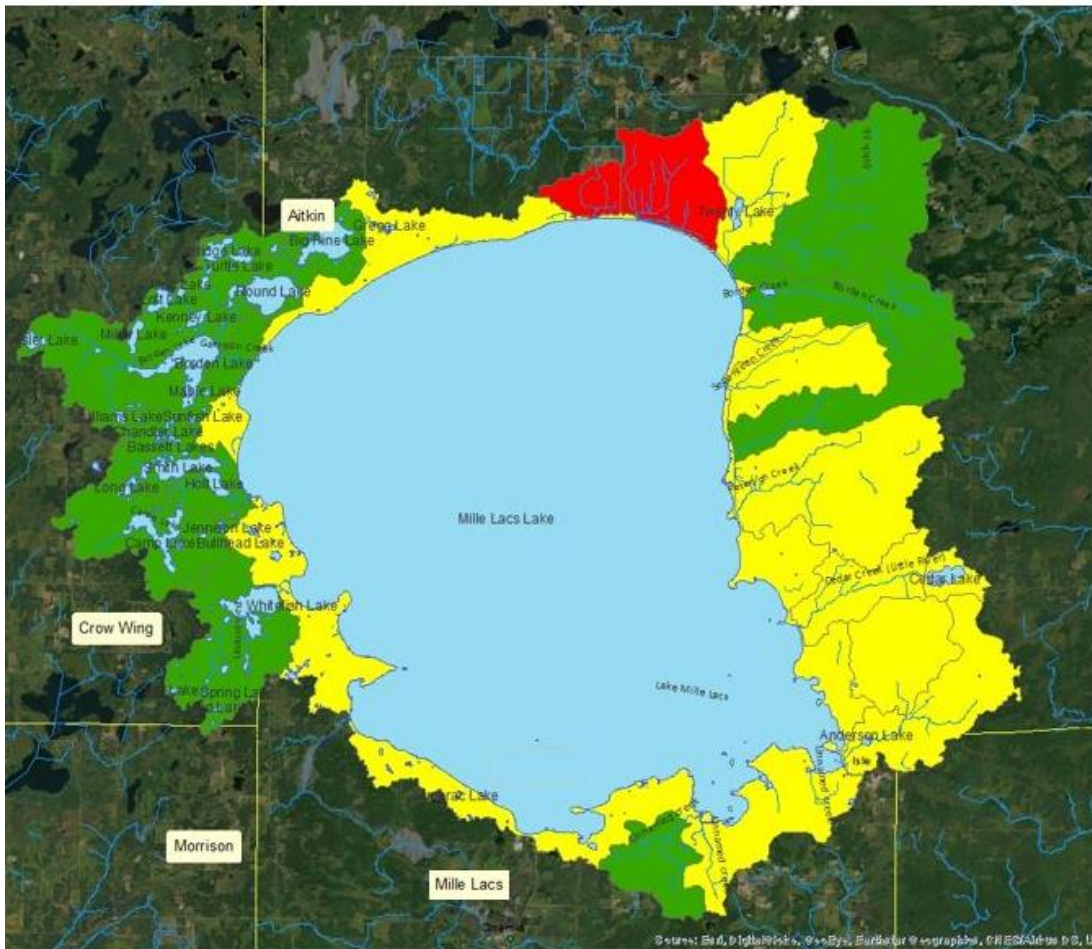




Why Should I Care About Runoff?

Who enjoys a nice rain? It can be relaxing to listen to, have a fresh pleasant smell, and the plants love it! A slow rain can soak into the ground and be very beneficial. However, too much rain too fast does not get absorbed into the ground and can result in runoff. This is water that travels across the land surface. Hard surfaces that don't allow that water to absorb into the ground (impervious surfaces), like a paved driveway, streets, sidewalks or boat ramps, can increase the speed of the runoff and even change the temperature of the water running crossing them. Now we have potentially warmer water that is cruising along and picking up speed and picking up stuff along the way! What does it pick up? The salt that was on the road, the leak that was on the driveway, the pet waste that was on the lawn, those leaves that haven't been raked, grass clippings, lawn fertilizer, nutrients, sediment, phosphorus. The list goes on! This all can end up in our lake!

Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Management Area Runoff



Annual Runoff (Inches)

	HIGH	5.94- inches
	MEDIUM	.24-.31 inches
	LOW	0-.23 inches

What can we do?



Catch rain water. Use a rain barrel to catch water coming off of your roof, which is an impervious surface! Recycle the water by watering your lawn or plants in a slower fashion and at a later time. This will allow water to soak in when the ground is less saturated.

Lawn Maintenance – Many people are proud of their lawn and you can be proud of yourself for all of the little things that you do that make a big difference. Picking up yard waste, pet waste, grass clippings and leaf litter prevent them from ending up in the lake. Less fertilizer on your lawn means less nutrients in the lake. A no mow buffer on the shoreline can prevent erosion and intercept rain water.

Check your Septic – Is your septic up to speed? Leaky or old septic systems can cause an issue for you and the lake. Having your septic checked, inspected, and up to code is just another great thing you can do to protect our water!

Slow down the runoff with Impervious Surface Alternatives - There are alternatives to some of the hard surfaces surrounding you. Impervious surfaces are any solid surface that prevents rain water from entering the ground, and the materials it is made out of can affect how fast the water moves across it. Though many people don't think about their driveways when they think about a healthy lake, there are some attractive alternatives for your driveway, sidewalk, and patio!

Allow it to absorb – rain gardens allow water to absorb and reduce the amount of pollutants that reach the lake. A rain garden is a landscaped area planted with wild flowers and other native vegetation that soaks up the rain! They can be strategically placed to catch water coming off of a roof or driveway.

Filter it! Did you know that a native plant buffer can FILTER rain water, stabilize your shoreline, and protect the lake! **Why native plants?** They have roots that go really deep! Those roots create a dense and strong system that will hold soil in place! Normal turf grass roots are generally shallow and cannot hold soil in place against waves and ice!



Native plants have other benefits too! They clean the water! Native plants help rain water soak into the soil and in a buffer they can help filter out pollutants before they reach the lake.

They provide habitat! Bees, butterflies, birds and other wildlife use the plants for their nectar, pollen, and seeds.

They stabilize your shoreline and you can enjoy a **low maintenance landscape!** Do you want to spend your time at the lake mowing? Having a buffer is not only less mowing for you, but once the plants are established they do not require watering, fertilizer, pesticides, or other lawn maintenance equipment. So yes, there are things that you can do on your property that have multiple benefits including shoreline stabilization, habitat, and a clean lake! Healthy land, healthy lake!

We can help you get started! Become a **COMPASS** Member and get your FREE Shoreland Stewardship Plan. Discover options for your property and help protect Mille Lacs Lake and the watershed!