Candlewood Lake
A promise...for the future.
“Just a Couple of Rocks”

Several years back, a Lafayette, Colorado resident was in Rocky Mountain National Park, hiking on a trail that ends at the very popular, pristine and small Emerald Lake. While enjoying the amazing views, he noticed a father and his two young sons. For fun, the boys were picking up rocks and throwing them into the lake. As the boys continued to toss the rocks into the clear, blue alpine waters, he approached the father and said to him, “You know, they shouldn’t be throwing rocks into the lake.” The father looked at him, puzzled, and said, “What’s the big deal, it’s just a couple of rocks?” The perceptive response that followed said it all.

“Three million people visit this park each year. If every person that came here threw ‘just a couple of rocks’ into the lake it would be completely filled in no time.” With a newfound perspective, the father then explained to his boys why they shouldn’t throw stones into the lake.

With this lesson in mind, we all need to realize that our actions with regard to our own lake’s health have a much larger impact when we accept the fact that we don’t act alone. While rocks may not be a problem on Candlewood, things such as storm water, yard care practices and septic systems are in fact areas of top concern. There are approximately 1,500 properties on Candlewood and several times that in the Candlewood Lake watershed that may be knowingly or unknowingly contributing in some way, small or large, to the decline in water quality here. Keep that in mind the next time you decide to do something or not do something that potentially results in a negative impact on the lake, even if you consider it small or insignificant.

By the same token, every small step you and your neighbors can take to help protect Candlewood Lake adds up to a much greater good for the Lake. With publications such as this and concerned citizens helping to spread the word, everyone’s small contribution can make a big difference for Candlewood Lake….a difference that we can all enjoy and be proud of.

We put this short guide together to help people and communities make those contributions that will result in a healthy future for Candlewood Lake. Most of the things recommended within are simple changes we can all make to help protect this amazing resource. This guide can be used in two ways. The first is by following the tips to help protect Candlewood Lake. For those who desire more information, an interactive, electronic version of this publication will be created and made available on our website www.candlewoodlakeauthority.org. It will allow you to click on different features highlighted throughout. Doing so will provide you with additional details about the steps we can take in our daily lives and on our properties to not only prevent Candlewood from further declines in water quality, but perhaps even start to return Candlewood Lake to the water quality enjoyed by residents here decades ago. You can’t do it alone, but fortunately you won’t have to. Set a good example….and help us spread the word!

Best regards,
Candlewood Lake Authority

PS – If you ever have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact us. We are more than happy to help.
Storm Drains

The catch basins on your road don’t go to a wastewater treatment plant.....they can either lead directly to a local body of water, such as Candlewood Lake, or a local stream, wetland area etc., that eventually drains to Candlewood. Trash, grass clippings, leaves, leaking automotive fluids and sediment that flow into the storm may be heading directly into our freshwater environments. How can we prevent that?

1) Prevent harmful items from entering the storm drains. Never put any automotive fluids or chemicals down a storm drain. Don’t allow your trash, grass clippings or leaves to enter the storm drains or settle in your gutter, waiting for the rain to carry them to the drain.

2) Have your storm drain cleaned regularly to help it function properly. The bottom of the storm drain has an area that is designed to fill up with sand and other sediment so that it doesn’t flow through the out pipe. If that fills up to the level of the pipe, the sediment will flow directly out of the drain.

Candlewood Lake Starts Here! We want people to be aware that our storm drains can pollute our lake. Marking storm drains with metal markers (left) or painted markers will help raise awareness of this issue. For more information on the storm drain marking program, please contact us at 860-354-6928 or visit our website at www.candlewoodlakeauthority.org.

Candlewood Lake Watershed Map

A lake’s watershed is the area of land that catches rain and snow and drains it towards the lake.
The more storm water falling onto your property that you can get to soak into the ground and not flow off your property and directly enter the lake or flow into the street gutter that leads to a storm drain, the better. Water that soaks or infiltrates into the ground is naturally cleansed by the soil, removing chemicals, pollutants and sediment that would otherwise enter our waterways. Here are some suggestions on how to control storm water.

1) **Install rain barrels** at your down spouts to collect roof runoff. Then use that water to water your garden.

2) **Build rain gardens** to catch runoff from roofs, driveways, walkways and your lawn. Rain gardens are small depressions in your lawn, filled in with plants, grasses and shrubs, that collect storm water and allow it to soak into the ground and be cleansing by the soil and used by rooted plants.

3) **Create a buffer.** A buffer is a strip of vegetated land that helps to cleans runoff before it can enter a local waterway. In addition, a buffer helps to stabilize the shoreline, prevents erosion, and provides habitat for wildlife. If you live on the lake or another body of water, your primary buffer would be along the shore. If you live in the watershed but not on a body of water, a buffer strip can be created along the road so that the storm water that may run down your yard can be cleansed before it flows into the street gutter. Why is that important? The street gutter leads to a storm drain....and that storm drain doesn’t lead to a water treatment plant, it likely leads directly to a local wetland, stream or lake.

4) **Reduce Impervious surfaces** such as driveways and sidewalks – rainwater that can’t soak into the ground to be cleansed and recharge our water table runs off impervious surfaces, picking up speed, pollution (such as automotive fluid leaks) and sediment before running either directly into our lakes and streams or into a storm drain that brings the contaminated storm water to a body of water. Reduce impervious surfaces by replacing them with things like crushed stone or mulch pathways, block driveways etc.
Do not rake your leaves into lakes, ponds, or streams! Nature provides all the fallen leaves the inland water resource needs. Leaves that enter a lake or pond decay and then provide nutrients for algae and weed growth, as well as consume valuable oxygen from the water when decomposing that can harm aquatic life in the lake, not to mention it speeds up the filling in process occurring in our lake. So supplementing the leaves that nature adds with all the leaves from your property is not good for the lake. Try composting the leaves instead.

Some property owners hire others to maintain their lawn and gardens. Many of those contractors and their employees have no idea of the negative impacts associated with dumping leaves into lakes, ponds, and streams. It is important that the property owner clearly instructs the contractor that leaves are not to be raked or blown into the lake. Ignorance is not bliss when it comes to our inland waters.

Pick up pet waste. It may seem “natural”, but when pet waste washes into the lake, that is unnatural. Pet wastes contain nutrients that pollute the lake and contribute to weed and algae growth. They also contain pathogens that can impact human health. You wouldn’t allow human waste to wash into the lake, don’t allow pet waste to either.

Don’t use pesticides or chemicals on your yard. They can wash into the lake. If you MUST treat your lawn, do NOT use a whole lawn treatment, rather spot treat only specific problem areas. Also, ensure that any treatment isn’t applied before a rain event or during windy days.

Don’t mow your lawn too short! Did you know that ideally, your grass should be 2-3 inches in length? Longer blades have deeper roots and require less water to stay healthy....and it’s softer to walk on as well. Those longer root systems improves the lawn’s ability to infiltrate water, and therefore decrease runoff.

Use no-phosphorous fertilizer. Most lawns in the area don’t need additional phosphorous; there is usually plenty in the soil already and adding more doesn’t improve the lawn. The phosphorous in the fertilizer often times gets washed into the lake, through lawn runoff when it rains, and that phosphorous then feeds the weeds and algae growing in the lake.

A bag of fertilizer has a three number notation on the front (such as 18-3-11) – and the middle number indicates the phosphorous content. Buy fertilizer with a zero or low phosphorous number to help protect the lake.
Why is your septic system important when it comes to the health of the Lake? A septic system breaks down solid waste and the leaching fields distribute the liquid waste to the surrounding soils. The soils then treat liquid waste before it leaches to ground or surface waters. If your leaching field isn’t working properly, those nutrients could making their way to the waters of Candlewood Lake, contributing to the nutrient loading that fuels algae and other aquatic growth as well as creating other health hazards. Here are some tips to keeping a lake-friendly septic system.

1) **Pump your septic system regularly.** Every 2-3 years is usually sufficient, but that can vary based on your usage.

2) **Don’t dump chemicals, fats/grease or products other than septic safe toilette paper** down your toilette or sinks. These products can impair the function of your septic system, reducing the breakdown of solids and clogging septic lines.

3) **Inspect or have your system inspected.** Lush green lawn over your septic field is just one indication of a failing septic system.

4) **Use no-phosphorous laundry detergent and dish detergent.** They can be found in most grocery stores. The phosphorous in detergents can lead to increased algae growth in the lake.