

Close the Cottage with Care

Website only
498

William LaFlamme, Maine DEP
From *In Our Back Yard* a weekly column of the
Maine Department of Environmental Protection

The summer months have flown by. It seems like just yesterday you were opening up your cottage for the summer. Things were so hectic then; cleaning, repairing, hooking up the waterline, installing the dock and mooring, and launching the boat, in anticipation of those fun-filled days on the water. Now it is time to get the cottage ready for the harsh fall and winter months ahead. You probably have a list of things to do to ensure that expensive repairs will not be needed next spring.

When going through this yearly winterizing ritual, it is important to consider possible impacts to waterbodies and the surrounding environment from these activities. After all, one of the main rea-

To make sure that shoreline areas will not succumb to ice or wave damage, inspect the shoreline thoroughly. Stabilize any eroding areas with vegetation or rock riprap if necessary. If using riprap, or patching a retaining wall, anything more than minor maintenance and repair will require state and local permits, so plan accordingly. This is also a good time to inspect parking and landscaped areas for signs of erosion. When removing docks and boats from the water, try to store them in an area that will not kill vegetation. A stable shoreline and healthy vegetation are important in keeping eroding soil from harming water quality.



*Now is the time to prepare
your camp for winter*

sons you go to the cottage is to enjoy the area's unspoiled beauty.

Winterizing a cottage requires preventing pipes from freezing. Unless the structure is heated year round, most owners drain the water system to ensure that it won't freeze. In the past it was common practice to use antifreeze to protect plumbing. Antifreeze is toxic and it poses a threat to ground and surface waters not to mention the danger of it being ingested by pets. Adding antifreeze to plumbing fixtures is not necessary, provided all the fixtures are completely drained. If you can't do this, use low toxicity antifreeze to minimize potential threats.

Regarding boat motors and other power equipment, do not try to drain gasoline from fuel tanks. Instead use fuel stabilizer (available from your dealer or auto parts store) to keep fuel fresh for next season. Winterize your engine(s) away from the water. When changing lubricating oils, collect the oil and bring it to a recycling facility for proper disposal.

Wash boats away from the water, preferably at a commercial car wash. Many detergents and motor oils contain chemicals that can pollute waterbodies.

Following these simple rules when winterizing your cottage will go far in protecting the natural resources you so enjoy as a cottage owner. We all must work together to ensure that our natural resources remain in good shape for future generations.

Maine Lakes Forum

Creating an online community for monitors to exchange information and equipment was proposed by volunteers at last year's coordinator meeting. The Maine Lakes Forum is a resource to communicate with monitors across the state. You can post questions, respond to inquiries, and share stories at this website.

Discussion topics include

- ◆ Equipment Exchange
- ◆ Water Quality Issues
- ◆ Resources at the Brackett Center
- ◆ Sharing Experiences
- ◆ Invasive Plant Patrol Strategies
 - Prevention
 - Detection
 - Response

Special thanks to Marc Civittolo, water quality volunteer on Dyer Long Pond, for developing the site.

Log on now to join!

From the address below click on a subject of interest and post your comment by clicking "New Topic."

www.MaineVolunteerLakeMonitors.org/forum