

# PLEASE DO YOUR PART TO KEEP QUONOHONTAUG POND BEAUTIFUL



**Salt Ponds  
Coalition**




Quonochontaug Pond is the cleanest of the Rhode Island salt ponds, but pollutants from our homes - lawn fertilizers and chemicals, nitrogen and bacteria from outdated septic systems, and household cleaners - are starting to threaten the health of the ponds. These pollutants are carried by surface and groundwater from our homes into the pond - even from homes miles away. The end result in portions of Quonnie Pond, are seasonal algae blooms that look bad, smell bad and create conditions in which many marine creatures can not survive.

## CHANGES YOU CAN MAKE TO HELP THE POND AND STILL HAVE A GREAT YARD

Fertilizer and lawn chemicals are a significant source of pollution and ones that can easily be reduced. Please follow these important guidelines and pass the attached sheet to your lawn-care professional.

- ▶ Weekapaug lawns need little or no fertilizer, but they do tend to be acidic and have a significant need for lime. (Several lawns around Weekapaug have been tested and none needed fertilizer.)
- ▶ Follow directions: Use the recommended type of fertilizer and always apply the lowest recommended amounts. Recent research suggests half the recommended amount is adequate.
- ▶ Use a mulching mower and leave the grass cuttings on your lawn. Grass trimmings alone can provide up to 50% of needed nutrients to your grass.
- ▶ Set your mower height to a higher setting and don't cut more than 1/3 of shoot growth. This encourages healthy, well-rooted grass that is hardier and drought resistant.
- ▶ If you must use fertilizer, use slow release organic fertilizers with at least a 30% WIN (water insoluble nitrogen) rating.
- ▶ Eliminate broad use of herbicides and pesticides. Towns such as Greenwich, CT have banned pesticide use on town fields due to health concerns. In pond water, small concentrations can kill shellfish and beneficial plants. Spot apply weed killers and pesticides rather than using a spreader.
- ▶ Reduce grass lawns and increase natural landscaping - especially between your lawn and wetlands or water. This reduces the volume of chemicals, encourages water infiltration, and discourages geese.
- ▶ Water smart. An inch of water per week, applied early in the morning so it can soak in, is enough.
- ▶ Pick up and dispose of dog waste. It is high in algae-producing nutrients and bacteria, and easily washes off the lawn in heavy rains.



Communicate all of this to your lawn care provider if you have one. Be diligent – it's easy to overfertilize!

## OTHER THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP REDUCE NUTRIENT POLLUTION:



Upgrade your septic system if it is old and have your tank pumped regularly. Every three to five years is recommended for an average system.



Use low phosphate laundry and dish detergents (recommended brands include: Seventh Generation, Sun and Earth, and Mrs. Meyers.)

For more specific reading, please see the Spring 2010, Spring 2009 and Spring 2008 issues of the Tidal Page newsletter at [www.saltpondscoalition.org](http://www.saltpondscoalition.org).