

## **Bathe in the lake? Don't**

Should we bathe in the lake? The decision to bathe in the lake is a matter of conscience, but it is easier to make your decision if you know the facts.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change warns of the hazards of increasing algal blooms by adding phosphorus (a nutrient) and other products into streams and lakes.

Although phosphorus has been eliminated from most soap products, even **biodegradable products used in soaps contain additives not found in lake water**. If your cottage does not have a shower, consider using a bucket to **wash away from shore** so that soap products do not enter the lake directly.

To assist cottage owners, the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association (FOCA) has published a "Shoreline Owners' Guide to Healthy Waterfronts." Page 3 of the document states:

**"Be Careful With Soap – At the lake, soaps should always be phosphate-free. Avoid antibacterial soaps. Soapy wastewater from dishwashing and bathing should be disposed of in soil at least 60 meters from the water's edge to prevent harming wildlife and creating nutrient-induced algae blooms."**

**Nature Clean** (a sponsor of FOCA) produces a line of natural cleaning products for use at the cottage. Their products may be found in the regular cleaning section of local grocery stores. See their websites: <https://natureclean.ca/pages/our-approach> and the "Where to Buy" link:

<https://natureclean.ca/pages/where-to-buy>

**Other website links helpful to campers, hikers and cottagers are:**

<http://www.algonquin-eco-watch.com/bathing.htm>

<http://www.cabinlivingmag.com/diy-advice/lake-water-quality/lake-friendly-soaps/>

<http://sectionhiker.com/biodegradable-soap-in-the-backcountry-the-campsuds-myth/>

[http://www.backcountryattitude.com/biodegradable\\_soap.html](http://www.backcountryattitude.com/biodegradable_soap.html)

*All of us are responsible for the environmental quality of our lakes. Please help keep our lakes and rivers clean.*