



ASK JEFF

Lake Ecology
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Since this is the first installment of ASK JEFF — answers to questions about our beautiful lake, let's start at the beginning:

Lake Shawnee is approximately 88 acres with an average depth of 6 feet. We have four feederstreams that flow into Shawnee and keep fresh water constantly flowing into it. It is a manmade lake that was created almost 75 years ago by the Arthur Crane Corp - they created many lakes in this area. Crane was like a beaver that dams up a stream, creates a pond (or Lake) and builds a home in it (or in Crane's case, around it). Lakes sell properties. You create a community within a community where all people have a vested interest in where they live.

Lake Shawnee is a perfect example of that type of community. Lake Shawnee is a member of COLA (coalition of lake associations) which meets in Lake Mohawk several times a year to discuss issues that many lakes are dealing with such as insurance, membership, bylaws, etc. We generally have at least one board member attend these meetings, so we stay informed.

From last month's article, we all know that we hire a company (Solitude) to manage our weeds and algae problems. They survey at least 6 to 7 times a season and treat when necessary.

The gentleman who works for them has been taking care of our lake for over 20 years. Needless to say, he knows our lake well.

One thing I always get asked is what can I (as a homeowner) do to help keep the lake clean. There is plenty. First, you must understand that every catch basin in our lake eventually drains into Lake Shawnee. So, this affects all homeowners no matter where you live. Let's look at some of the areas on your property and the actions you can take to help.

Septic systems: You all have a mini treatment plant in your yard that needs to be maintained. If you have come from an area of sewers, this is totally foreign to you. Let me explain how this works. Your toilets, sinks, and washing machine hookups all go to a main tank (some people have a separate tank for their laundry). Water from laundry and sinks is called "grey" water because it has no sewage waste in it. So, from the main tank, waste is left behind and the water is drained off into another tank where that water is drained into a leaching bed in your yard. That water leeches into crush rock and then into your soil. As it goes through the soil impurities are leached out. This is how a properly maintained system works.

Back to the solids left behind in the first tank. They need to be removed by having a company come and pump it out. If not properly maintained, those solids will get into your beds and things will not leech as they should. When water has nowhere to go, it comes up onto the surface and eventually onto your driveway and the street and "you guessed it" into the catch basins. Trust me folks, this has happened many times. And if you are one of the 80 homeowners on the Lake, you must be extra vigilant about maintaining your system. I was very proud when Jefferson adopted a program where your system has to be inspected and pumped every three years. (It can go longer if there are only two people in the house). This was a significant move by our town to make sure our lake stays clean.

Washing your Car: Although many people go to a carwash, there are many who wash their car in their driveway. If possible, pull your car onto your lawn or get as far away from the road as possible. If your driveway is stone, then you are in good shape because it will leech through the stone first. 10 to 15 gallons of car dirt and suds can wind up going into our lake.

The best thing you can do is to go to a carwash.

That's it for now. I hope this was informative. Just always remember, the value of your house and property is directly related to the beauty and health of our lake.

Next month, I will discuss leaves & fertilizer. I bet you can't wait. Contact me with any questions.
Thank you. Jeff