



# Property Owner's Self-evaluation Guide



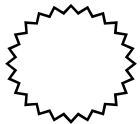
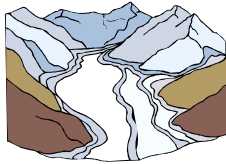
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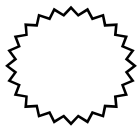
Every person lives within a watershed and our day to day activities, whether at home or work, have an effect on the quality of the water within a particular watershed. The following evaluation has been designed as a guide to assist landowners in determining their relative impact on water quality.

It is our hope that after watching the video tape "Property Owner's Guide to Water Quality Protection" and filling out this guide, you will be able to implement some practices which will help to minimize the adverse effects we all have on water quality.

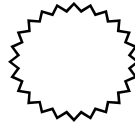
Please read each question and fill in a numerical value in each box then total up your score on the last page and find out how your property and habits measure up!



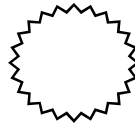
In the past year have you checked your toilet tanks for leaks? **YES, + 5 points.** (If not, place a few drops of food coloring in the toilet tank. If coloring is seen in the toilet bowl without flushing, a wasteful leak needs to be repaired).



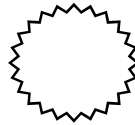
Are dishwasher and washing machines used only for full loads? **YES, + 5 points, NO, - 5 points.**



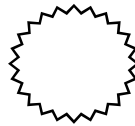
Do you have a garbage disposal? **YES, - 5 points.** Ground up garbage does not decompose easily and causes rapid buildup of solids in the septic tank. Solids may then move into the drain field, clogging distribution pipes and soil pores.



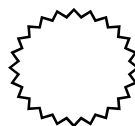
Have you written a letter or placed a phone call to a legislator or public official concerning a water quality issue? **YES, + 5 points.**



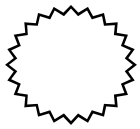
Leave naturally vegetated areas (buffer strips) along lake shores and stream beds. An undisturbed buffer strip of at least 100 feet is recommended, with more distance on steeper slopes. A buffer strip includes trees and shrubs—NOT LAWN. Do you have an appropriate buffer strip? **YES, + 5 points.**



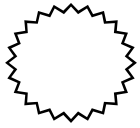
Is your rooftop perpendicular to the slope instead of parallel which helps to slow down runoff? **YES, + 5 points.**



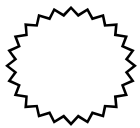
Do you mow your lawn to a height of 3 - 4 inches and leave the grass clippings to conserve water and minimize fertilizer use? **YES, + 5 points.**



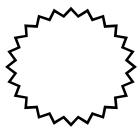
As a homeowner you have major influences on how your septic system works. Do you have a map on record of the location of all components of your system as well as maintenance records? **YES, + 5 points.**



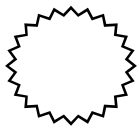
Do you check the sludge level in your septic tank every year and have a reputable contractor pump the tank when the sludge fills half the tank? (Average is every 2-3 years for year round residents, 5-6 years for part time residents). **YES, + 10 points.**



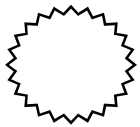
My septic system is located at least 100 feet away from the nearest water body. **YES, + 5 points.**



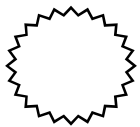
Is the toilet being used as a wastebasket? **NO, + 5 points.**



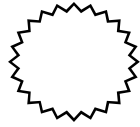
Do you take motor oil, antifreeze, etc. to an approved recycling facility? **YES, + 5 points.**



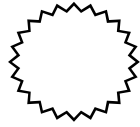
Do you use the least toxic household chemical product you can find or whenever possible use alternative, less harmful products (for example, baking soda instead of toilet cleaner or cedar chips instead of mothballs)? **YES, + 5 points.**



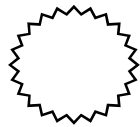
Does rainwater runoff from roof tops and driveways to a wooded area where it can slowly seep into the ground? **YES, + 10 points**, or does it drain directly into a lake or stream? **YES, - 10 points.**



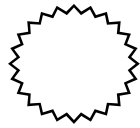
Exposed soil causes increased rainwater runoff and soil erosion. It also delivers unnecessary sediment and nutrients to streams and lakes. Are all land areas covered with plants (trees, shrubs, ground covers, or grass) and are all selected species appropriate for the soil and growing conditions of Hamilton County? **YES, +5 points.**



Do you conserve water by taking short showers instead of a bath, turning off the water while brushing your teeth, shaving and hand washing your dishes? **YES, + 5 points.**



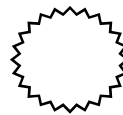
Never wash in the lake. If you are washing a car, yourself, a pet, etc., are you always at least 150 feet away from the water? **YES, + 5 points.**



If you are a member or active in a natural resource organization, **+ 5 points** and if you support environmental education programs for youth, **+ 5 points.**

## Score Card

Please add up the numbers from all of the previous boxes and write your total in the box below.



### **Total Score**

- 90 - 105** Excellent: You are a conservationist and a good example to your neighbors.
- 70 - 85** Good: You are thinking environmentally, but a few small changes are needed.
- 0 - 65** Poor: Your habits are a detriment to the water quality of your lake. Contact the Soil and Water office for assistance.