

## Thanks Shelburne Selectboard for raising the blade

Linda Patterson, Burlington  
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To the Editor:

On May 25, the Shelburne Selectboard unanimously endorsed the Raise the Blade campaign. With this vote, they officially recognized the value of raising the blade on town lawnmowers to three inches and leaving the grass clippings on the lawn. These practices help reduce stormwater runoff into lakes and streams.

Lee Krohn, Shelburne town manager, believes these practices “make good sense on many levels.”



According to Darwin Norris, maintenance superintendent, the town has been cutting at three inches for many years.

“We began this practice to reduce burning during the hot, dry parts of summer,” said Norris. “Grass clippings are nitrogen rich and reduce the need for fertilizer. Longer grass also helps choke out some weeds.”

Norris believes that the practices benefit the lake by reducing runoff.

Grass cut at three inches grows longer roots, reaching deeper moisture and creating air pockets that allow more rain absorption. Clippings left on the lawn decompose into organic matter that builds healthy soils. Healthy soils act like a sponge, soaking up, filtering and storing rainwater and snowmelt.

Cutting only about one-third of the length of the grass at each mowing is also a plus: grass conserves its energy for growing strong roots, and the clippings decompose more quickly.



Shelburne has joined a growing list of municipalities and businesses committed to following the practices. Participants include Hinesburg, Hyde Park, South Burlington, and many businesses.

Campaign organizers hope that homeowners will be encouraged by the commitment of these participants to raise the blade for their own lawns.

Raise the Blade signs will be placed around town on lawns mowed at three inches, to help provide maximum publicity for this important campaign. Informational brochures will be available in several locations.

The Raise the Blade campaign is part of Lawn to Lake, a collaboration of regional and state organizations devoted to water quality protection and healthy soils. The campaign’s goal is to educate the public about a scientific approach to lawn care that reduces stormwater runoff and improves soil health. (More at [lawntolake.org](http://lawntolake.org))

**Linda Patterson**

*Burlington*

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***Patterson** is a land use planner and water quality educator for Lake Champlain Sea Grant.*

