Responsible shore-land Lighting on Bad Medicine Lake- so what about light trespass ?

Bad Medicine Lake is a gem. It is natural, has crystal clear water, and a heavily (mostly)forested shoreline. The darkness of the pristine lakeshore woods is awesome.

Bad Medicine makes you feel like you are in the wilderness. It's not like other lakes, many(most) lakes feel developed and tame.
The reasons we all love Bad Medicine Lake: It's a sanctuary, it's an escape, its natural , it's quiet , it's peaceful, it's serene, it's magical and it's spiritual. Our lake also has darkness ,which like the water and shoreline, needs protection.

So let's talk about responsible shore-land lighting and how to keep Bad Medicine Lake naturally dark and be a good neighbor on the lake.

Artificial lighting allows us to engage in nighttime activities that would be impossible or unsafe under normal nighttime conditions. Whether it's boating or simply sitting on the porch to read, our enjoyment of the night is enhanced by the use of artificial light. At the same time, our lake at night ,provides a quiet open dark space that gives us privacy , a wilderness feeling, and an opportunity to enjoy the heavens and the stars. Balancing the ability to see at night with the desire to preserve the pristine beauty of the night darkness is the goal of sensible Shoreland lighting.

Sensible shoreline lighting:

Sensible lighting can minimize the three most serious problems along our shoreline:

Glare: when we see a distant point of light across the water, when we see a light from the fixture itself rather than what the fixture is meant to illuminate, we observe glare. Poorly designed or poorly installed lighting can hamper vision and also especially spoil the natural darkness and mood of the lake.

Light trespass: glare is the most common cause of light trespass. Light trespass is a light fixture on one property that illuminates on an adjacent property. It is not a legal concept but a description of the nuisance effect of improperly aimed ights or visibility of the lights from someone else's property(especially across the water).

We've all seen light poles with automatic timers, and light fixtures and excessive outdoor lighting around cabins that spill over on adjacent property or causes illumination on the lake (and is thus visible across the lake) which is not necessary.

Poorly designed lighting Is visible a long way across the lake… Because the waterfront is unobstructed water reflects glare from Shoreline lights over the water which trespasses on properties nearby and also distant across the lake

Sky Glow: much of our exterior lighting shines out on the lake and also shines upward causing sky glow.. we all enjoy the dark skies at Bad Medicine Lake and seeing the stars in the Milky Way. Let's all try to minimize sky glow.

Installing sensible Shoreland lighting can be especially challenging because of the ability of water to both reflect light and provide an unobstructed view from far away. Anybody that has seen the moon rise over the lake appreciates how reflective the water can be. Artificial light placed at or near the shoreline line is free to carry across the water for long distances.

While we all may have noticed glare from yard lights, cabin lights or unshielded lights across the lake, it's likely we've never ventured across the lake at night to see how our own cabin and its light the lake and cause light trespass

Let's start by making our own cabin lighting sensible and unobtrusive, only then helping our neighbors "see the light"

Please consider the following tips:

Do not use lights on poles and do not keep them on unless absolutely necessary. Do not use lights on poles with an automatic sensor that are on every night
turn off the pole light when you are done using it or preferably don't use it unless it's emergency or for safety

Turn off outdoor lights on your cabin, lot and shoreline unless absolutely needed. Keep the floodlights around your cabin turned off unless absolutely needed

Provide adequate lighting for the task but don't over light, choose lights that meet your needs without light in the entire area… Be sensible.

Glare is the most common lighting problem on the lake. Glare can be illuminated by shielding fixtures and aiming light fixtures away from the water and neighboring property. Proper fixture position is important. Even well shielded fixtures, when placed on tall poles can cast light on neighboring property and across the lake.

Use "full cut-off" lighting fixtures to minimize glare. Full cut -off means that no light is emitted above the horizontal. Full cut-off fixtures are more effective and actually increase safety since they produce very little of the glare that can dazzle the eye and reduce our ability to see into the shadow

Retrofit or replace existing fixtures (outdoor or indoor) with shields to reduce glare

Avoid dusk to dawn security yard lights! Yard lights on a pole with an automatic eye should be avoided

Please consider turning off your lights on a pole and all exterior lights at night if not really needed.
Only turn on exterior cabin lights when needed.

Shoreline lighting etiquette involves working with your neighbors. You may have considered this problem while others may not have thought about it at all.

The first easy step is education about Shoreland lighting and identifying all the sources of glare along the shoreline on Bad Medicine Lake.

If you're talking individually to a neighbor about a lighting problem, a careful explanation may be all that's needed.

Understand some of the facts about different lighting fixtures, energy savings, and the differences between good security light and a light that's just very bright. Most people like to be helpful and cooperative when approached in a friendly and cooperative manner.

Eliminating light glare and light trespass/pollution on Bad Medicine Lake is important. We all love Bad Medicine Lake for its natural darkness and untouched feel.

Please, let's all work together to keep the Bad Medicine shoreline and sky dark!

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