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WHAT IS SHORELINE RESTORATION?

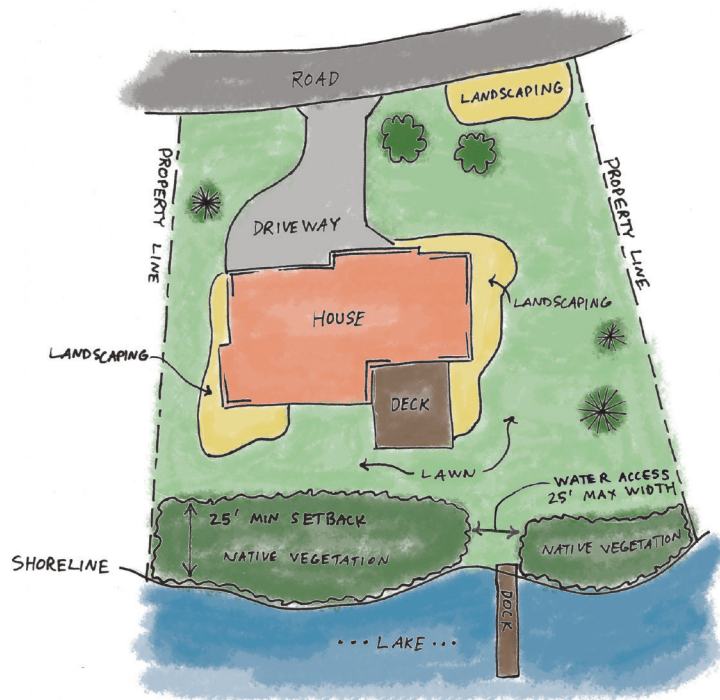
The shoreline along lakes and rivers provides critical habitat for fish and wildlife, improves water quality, and the overall health of a lake or river. Erosion of streambanks and shorelines can significantly impact water quality and habitat in lakes and rivers.

Native vegetation along the shore acts as a buffer zone to help reduce runoff, erosion, and sedimentation. Natural materials such as wood and native plants along the bank are used to stabilize as well as restore a shoreline. Aquatic plants provide food and shelter for wildlife while reducing the problems caused by geese.

By creating/maintaining a buffer of native grasses, wildflowers, trees, and shrubs, you can diversify and enhance your shoreline while creating a beautiful landscape for years to come.



CREATING A SHORELINE BUFFER



Lake and river properties can be designed with ecology in mind that includes opportunities for human enjoyment. The approach for creating a natural look will include creating a native buffer (also called filter strips or a buffer zone) that separates the lawn from the lake.

The buffer zone is an unmown strip of native vegetation that extends both lakeward and landward from the water's edge generally 25-50 feet. Adding a buffer can restore many functions critical to the health of the lake that may have been eliminated previously by sod, hard structures, or mowing.

Native buffers typically include native grasses, shrubs, trees, aquatic plants, and wildflowers or flowers that bloom throughout the growing season. The native vegetation will provide beautiful habitat, filter out pollutants, and prevent soil erosion while still allowing a space for family activities.

Your shoreline buffer design will include (see example):

- Space for family recreation
- Maintain water access and recreational area near the water
- Shoreline stabilization
- Native plants and erosion control techniques for water quality, as well as fish and wildlife habitat





BENEFITS OF NATIVE PLANTS



BANK STABILIZATION

Native plants have dense, deep intertwined root systems that physically strengthen soil and stabilize banks from erosion. During wet periods, plants remove excess moisture making banks more resistant to erosion or slumping.



CLEAN WATER

Deep rooted vegetation intercepts rainwater runoff by slowing it down and filtering out much of the nutrients, soil particles, and other pollutants.



FISH & WILDLIFE HABITAT

Diverse shoreland vegetation and woody debris both on shore and within the water provides shelter, food, and migration corridors for fish and wildlife. Flowering plants provide nectar for important pollinators and other beneficial insects.



LOW MAINTENANCE

Once established, native plants do not need additional water or fertilizer. The plants are insect and disease tolerant, allowing homeowners more time to enjoy their property without the necessary maintenance of traditional lawns.



ADDS BEAUTY

Native buffers contain a variety of plants that can offer an array of colors and textures throughout the seasons.



HAVE A GOOSE PROBLEM?

Geese are less inclined to wander through a shoreline vegetative buffer to get to a lawn for fear of predators that may be hiding within the natural vegetation.

Shoreline Restoration continued on next page





SHORELINE PROPERTY PRACTICES

- Avoid mowing to the water's edge as turf grasses have shallow root systems, providing little soil stability. Deeper rooted plants are more beneficial at filtering out excess nutrients and runoff and provide habitat for fish and wildlife.
- Control stormwater runoff from hard surfaces and other areas to prevent stormwater from flowing into the lake.
- Get your septic system inspected to make sure it is working properly to avoid harmful bacteria entering the lake.
- Dispose of household hazardous waste products at the Stearns County Household Hazardous Waste Facility to keep soil and groundwater clean.
- For the contractors, dock, and lift installers out there, help decrease the spread of invasive species by properly cleaning equipment.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

The Stearns County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) works with many federal, state, and non-profit conservation agencies to secure funding to offer financial assistance to Stearns County landowners who voluntarily want to improve and protect our natural resources. To qualify for financial assistance:

- A native vegetation buffer is required on at least 75% of your shoreline. The 25% maximum width or 25 feet remains open for access to the water or recreational area. Docks and lifts can also be stored on the native planting in the winter.
- The buffer must extend at least 25 feet landward or to the top of the nearest steep slope.
- The financial assistance often comes from public dollars. To get the most of these public dollars, the buffers are required to remain in place in perpetuity. Therefore, a deed restriction will be recorded upon completion of the project with the Stearns County Recorder's Office. This will inform the future owners of the buffer.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE



The Stearns County SWCD has an experienced Riparian Resources Specialist, Greg Berg, available to work one-on-one with you to help determine the best methods for managing your shoreline. Assistance may include on-site consultations, one-on-one project design, cost estimation, and guidance throughout project installation and maintenance.

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For project examples: www.stearnscountyswcd.net/shoreline

DNR Restore Your Shore: www.dnr.state.mn.us/rsy/index.html

Maintaining and Restoring Natural Shorelines:

www.dnr.state.mn.us/lakescaping/maintaining-and-restoring-natural-shorelines.html

Shoreline Living Booklet:

www.midwestglaciallakes.org/resources/shorelineliving/

