

A WATERFRONT PROPERTY OWNER'S GUIDE FOR HEALTHY LAKES & STREAMS

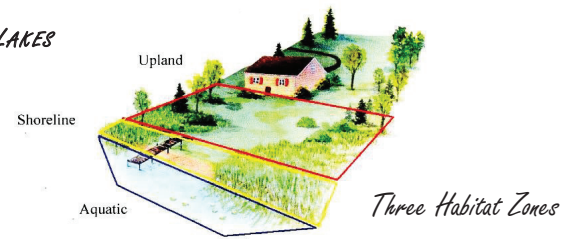
Courtesy of the
Henrietta Township Planning Commission

As a waterfront property owner, you have a unique opportunity to serve as an environmental steward and at the same time protect your investment. Property owners often bring with them traditional landscaping ideas that strive for the conventional "groomed" look of a typical suburban neighborhood. Yet, traditional landscaping can harm the many things that you love about lake front living that depend on natural vegetation. Allowing a vegetated buffer to remain and grow along portions of the waterfronts will provide habitat for fish and wildlife that use the lake edge but also helps the lake in many other ways too. Even though many properties have seawalls instead of a natural shoreline, the homeowner can trap runoff water with a vegetated buffer as well as plant native aquatic vegetation on the waterfront side to help restore lost habitat. By following some simple guidelines, you can add to your enjoyment of your shoreland property, increase its value and preserve it for future generations. A series of small positive actions can have significant benefits for our lakes and the environment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.mishorelinepartnership.org
www.mi-riparian.org
www.mlsua.org www.michiganlakes.msue.msu.edu
www.shoreline.msu.edu/resources
www.michigan.gov/dnr/inlandlakes
www.mi.gov/aquaticinvasives
www.mnppa.org
www.watershedcouncil.org
www.hnvc.org
www.ewashtenaw.org/raingardens

NATURAL SHORELINES = HEALTHY LAKES



SIX TIPS FOR MAINTAINING WATER RESOURCES

CONDITIONS

1. Cleared manicured lot – lacks shade and privacy; loss of native plants leads to more erosion, runoff...and work for you!
2. Runoff – flows faster over impervious surfaces accelerating erosion; pollutants and excess silt degrade water quality for aquatic life.
3. Chemical fertilizers and pesticides – degrade water quality, are hazardous to your health, can be deadly for fish and other wildlife.
4. Manicured lawn to the water's edge – lacks deep roots required to stabilize the bank.
5. Malfunctioning septic system – allows phosphorous and bacteria to leach into adjacent waterways. Signs of failing systems are odors, wet spots or lush grass, and septic tank backups.
6. Traditional lawns attract geese, which are grazers. In one week, an adult goose can produce 15 pounds of droppings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Prune trees rather than removing them; plant native low maintenance trees and shrubs to reduce erosion and absorb runoff.
2. Replace impervious surfaces with porous materials where possible; redirect runoff into areas designed to absorb and filter runoff, away from the water's edge.
3. "Mow it high and let it lie"- leave grass (3 inch) high to retain moisture, mulch clippings for fertilizer. Commercial fertilizers with center number zero. Example: 12-0-12.
4. Start a buffer (15 feet wide) – leave some grass uncut along the water's edge, restore with deep rooting plants.
5. Properly maintain your septic system. Minimize the amount of water going into your system with efficient fixtures, keep sprinklers and downspouts away from drain field.
6. Establishing a buffer containing plants that are at least 12 to 24 inches high between the water and your lawn can deter nuisance wildlife.