



Protecting Water Quality on Shoreline Properties

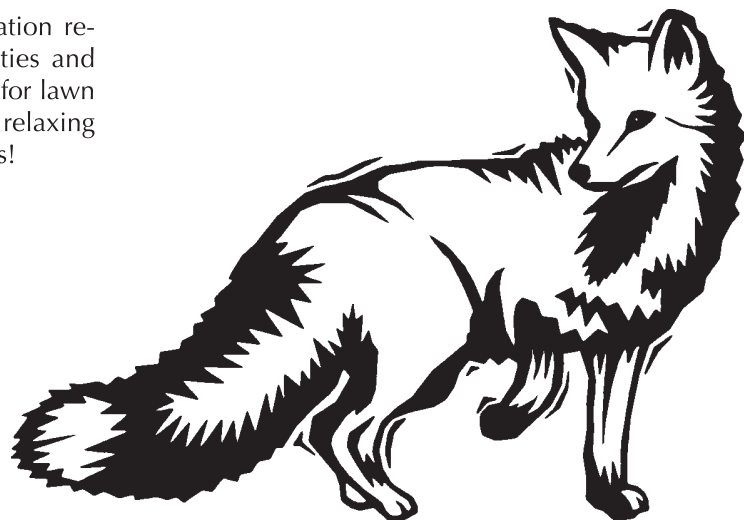
Besides enhancing wildlife habitat, planting a shoreline vegetation strip has other values for your property.

- Trees, shrubs, and other vegetation in shoreline areas prevent erosion. The deep roots of trees and shrubs bind the soil in place. In most situations, vegetation can control shoreline erosion more cost-effectively than seawalls or other engineered structures.
- Shoreline vegetation traps sediment, preventing it from clouding the water and destroying fish habitat.
- Shoreline vegetation reduces the amount of polluted runoff entering your lake or stream by intercepting and filtering pollutants. Lawns can only remove a limited amount of nutrients from runoff.

The Benefits Are Endless

Natural landscaping can enhance the property value of waterfront property. Shoreline vegetation offers privacy and protection from sound, reducing the noise you may hear from motorboats, personal watercraft, or your neighbors.

Planting trees, shrubs, and vegetation reduces the amount of lawn on properties and the amount of time and energy needed for lawn maintenance. Extra time can be spent relaxing and enjoying Northern Michigan's lakes!



Protecting Wildlife Habitat During New Construction

For new construction on waterfront property, maintaining natural vegetation is the best recommendation.

Where excavation and building will occur, care should be taken to avoid damage to trees including their root systems. The root system on some tree species extends 2-3 times beyond the branch area of the tree. Shallow-rooted trees are most susceptible to root system disturbance. Clay soils and soils with high water tables are especially prone to compaction and subsequent damage to trees.

If you would like more information on Lakescaping, contact the Watershed Council at (231) 347-1181.

Information in this article was adapted from materials developed by Carrol Henderson, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Illustrations by Thomas W. Ford



Helping You Protect Your Vital Resources

The Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council was formed in 1979 by local lake associations with assistance from the University of Michigan Biological Station. The Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council is the voice for Northern Michigan's waters. We are dedicated to protecting our lakes, streams, wetlands, and ground water through respected advocacy, innovative education, technically sound water quality monitoring, and thorough research. We achieve our mission by empowering others and we believe in the capacity to make a positive difference. We work locally, regionally and throughout the Great Lakes Basin to achieve our goals.

The Watershed Council is a nonprofit organization supported primarily through private donations. Please join our efforts.

Yes! I want to support the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council's work to protect Northern Michigan's valuable water resources!

Here is my tax deductible contribution of:

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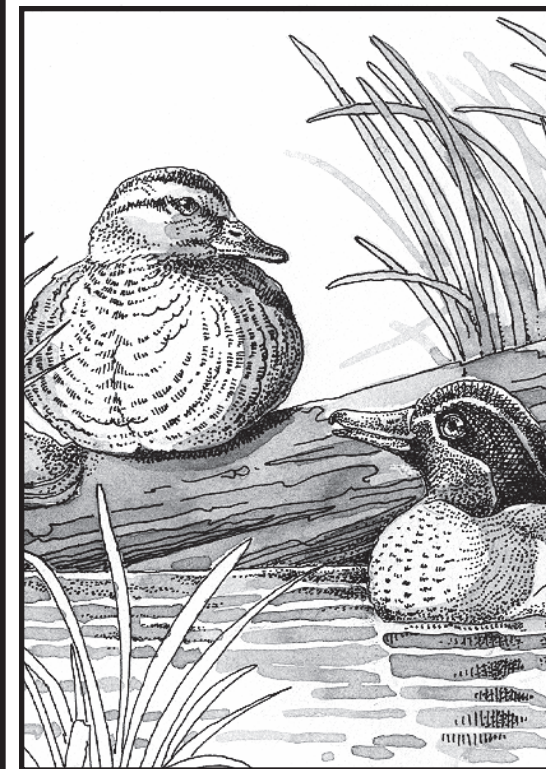
Name _____

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Please make checks payable to "TOMWC" and mail to the address below.

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Lakescaping for Wildlife



Vital Resources Series





Living on a lake provides an opportunity to get to know your waterway intimately and experience its changes with time and the seasons. It also provides opportunities to observe wildlife that inhabit the lake ecosystem. Hearing the eerie call of a common loon, watching a bald eagle soar, or viewing a deer as it takes a drink at the water's edge are experiences that enrich shoreline living.

One of the best things you can do to create or enhance wildlife habitat on your waterfront property is to maintain the natural vegetation along the shoreline or restore it by planting a mixture of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants. Planting a variety of vegetation types and species provides more diverse habitat for wildlife and offers other benefits including water quality protection, property enhancement, and shoreline erosion control. Songbirds, amphibians, small mammals, butterflies, and other animals can find food, shelter, and nesting sites in diverse natural lakeshore vegetation.

Native plants will have the best chance of survival and require the least amount of maintenance. Additionally, native plant communities often have an aesthetic fit to the site which is difficult to achieve with a collection of exotic plants. Many of our favorite landscape plants – from dogwood to violets— are native.

Considerations for Enhancing Wildlife Habitat on Your Shoreline Property

When designing a landscaping project to enhance wildlife habitat and to protect water quality, it is important to consider the site characteristics. What

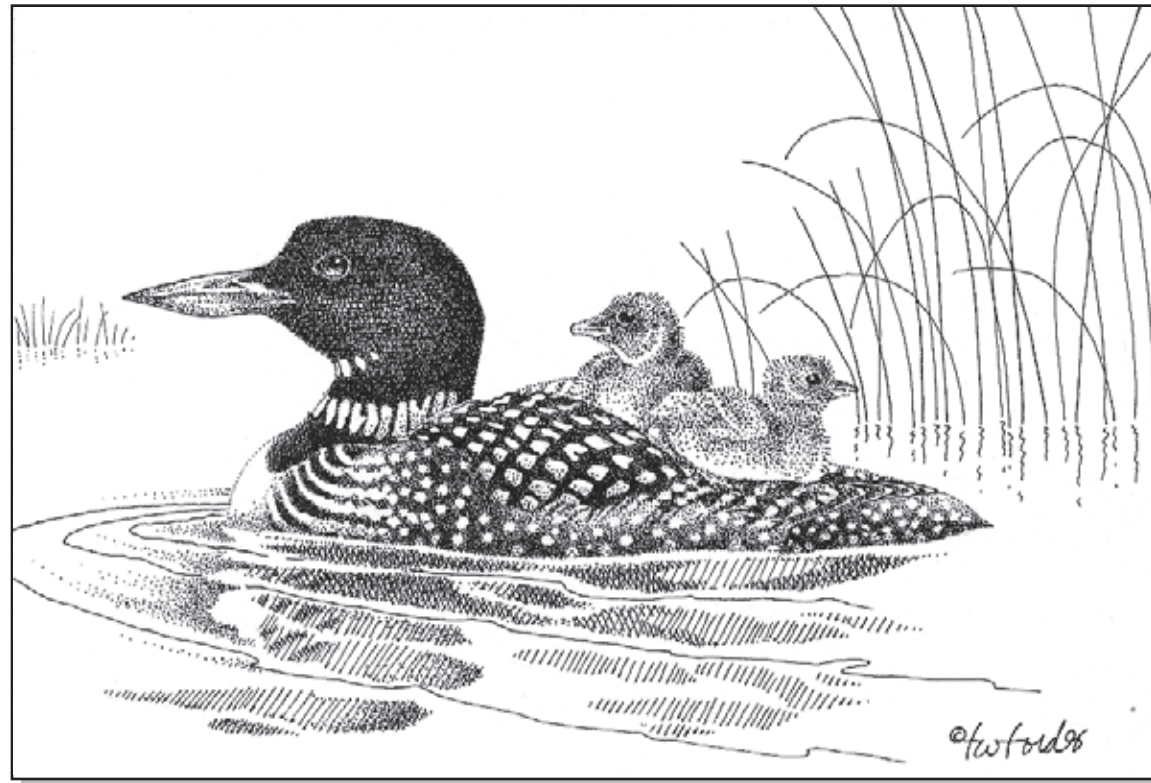
are the biophysical site conditions of your project area? Choosing plants that will thrive along your lakeshore is important. Consider:

1. Soils – Drainage and fertility
Are they well-drained or poorly drained? Rich and organic or more sterile and sandy?
2. Slope
Steep and unstable or more level?
3. Amount of sunlight
Full sun, partial sun, or full shade?
4. Exposure
Harsh winds or more protected?
5. Existing on-site or nearby plant communities
Take cues from local vegetation as to what types of plants are best suited to your lakeshore.

Be sure to balance site characteristics and conditions with your property needs. Consider the space requirements of dock storage, outbuildings, lake access, and other property uses. Try to separate wildlife habitat from high activity zones.

Lastly, consider what species you want to attract, what type of habitat you want to enhance, and how much space you can dedicate to your lakescaping project. The wildlife habitat area should be at least 35 feet deep, starting from the water's edge. The deeper the shoreline vegetation strip, the more effective it will be at protecting water quality. But remember, maintaining any depth of shoreline vegetation is better than none at all.

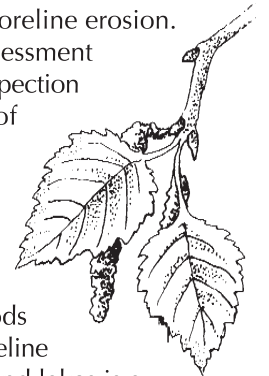
Installing bird houses, bird feeders, and bat and butterfly houses may increase your chances of attracting certain birds.



How to Stop Losing Ground

Shoreline vegetation can help prevent shoreline erosion. The Watershed Council offers a service to assess and control shoreline erosion.

The on-site assessment includes an inspection of the extent of the problem, causes, and potential solutions.



One of the best methods to control shoreline erosion on inland lakes is a method called biotechnical erosion control. Biotechnical erosion control brings together biological, ecological, and engineering concepts to produce a living, functioning system to prevent erosion.

Biotechnical erosion control uses vegetation along with other flexible structures such as rock riprap. It is one of the best methods to use where the shore is subject to occasional ice scouring because it can rebound quickly on its own following disturbance. The vegetation used in a biotechnical erosion control project can be selected to enhance wildlife habitat.

If you would like more information about this service contact the Watershed Council at (231) 347-1181.