

Living on a lake or stream provides an opportunity to get to know your waterway intimately and experience its changes with time and the seasons. It also provides opportunities to relax and enjoy the splendor of the near shore environment. For some, the enjoyment comes from observing wildlife that utilize the shoreline ecosystem. For others, it's simply the connection to the water which instills a deep feeling for the outdoors and of memories past. Access to the water provides many recreational benefits as well—swimming, fishing, boating, or simply enjoying the breathtaking views and serenity that one might experience from the sight and sound of moving water. Whatever your reasons for owning and enjoying shoreline property, enhancing your waterfront landscape with a shoreline greenbelt may greatly increase the benefits you derive.

WHAT IS A SHORELINE GREENBELT?

A shoreline greenbelt is a strip of diverse vegetation, either naturally growing or planted, along the shoreline of a lake or stream. Usually consisting of a mixture of trees, shrubs, ground cover, and wildflowers, shoreline greenbelts offer waterfront residents an attractive way to protect the water quality of their lakes and streams while providing many additional benefits as well.

GREENBELTS PROVIDE A ZONE OF PROTECTION FOR WATER QUALITY

- Greenbelts minimize polluted runoff by trapping sediment and debris and by filtering more nutrients, toxic substances, and other pollutants from runoff than mowed lawns.
- Lawn fertilizers and pesticides applied near a shoreline can end up washing into our waterways—causing unwanted pollution. Greenbelt vegetation reduces the need for chemical applications and lawn maintenance.
- Deep roots of greenbelt vegetation bind the soil in place—in most cases, preventing shoreline erosion more cost-effectively than seawalls or other engineered structures.
- Greenbelts reduce nutrient pollution from reaching our waterways by drawing up the by-products of septic system wastes.

SHORELINE GREENBELTS PROVIDE MANY OTHER IMPORTANT BENEFITS

- Shoreline greenbelts can be very attractive—providing aesthetic beauty for your property and enhancing your waterfront views.
- Greenbelts offer privacy and protection from sound, reducing the noise you may hear from motorboats, personal watercraft, or your neighbors.
- Planting trees, shrubs, ground cover, and wildflowers may enhance the value of your waterfront property.
- Songbirds, butterflies, small mammals, and other animals have a greater chance of finding food, shelter, and nesting sites in greenbelt vegetation than a lawn.
- Greenbelts can make effective windbreaks, saving energy by slowing the speed of the wind around buildings.

HOW TO STOP LOSING GROUND

Because greenbelts are so effective at controlling shoreline erosion on lakes and streams, they are sometimes installed, enhanced or maintained for this purpose. The Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council offers a service to assess shoreline erosion problems and prescribe, design and/or install solutions. Biotechnical erosion control is the method most commonly prescribed. This method which utilizes woody vegetation along with flexible armoring brings together biological, ecological, and engineering concepts to produce a living, functioning system designed to prevent shoreline erosion. The vegetation used in a biotechnical erosion control project can be selected to complement a greenbelt design too. If you would like more information about this service, contact the Watershed Council at (231) 347-1181.

TECHNICAL SERVICES OFFERED BY THE WATERSHED COUNCIL:

- Shoreline Property Management Consultation
- Biotechnical Shoreline Erosion Control
- Septic System Evaluation
- Wetland Identification & Delineation
- Research and Dissemination of Technical Information
- Conservation Planning & Design

Members receive a 10% discount on all technical services.

OTHER RESOURCE AGENCIES:

Antrim Conservation District – (231) 533-8363
Antrim County–MSU Extension – (231) 533-8818
Antrim County Planning Department – (231) 533-6265
Charlevoix Conservation District – (231) 582-6193
Charlevoix County–MSU Extension – (231) 582-6232
Charlevoix County Office of Planning and Zoning – (231) 547-7234
Cheboygan Conservation District – (231) 627-3383
Cheboygan County–MSU Extension – (231) 627-8815
Cheboygan County–Planning and Zoning Department – (231) 627-2440
Emmet Conservation District – (231) 348-0605
Emmet County–MSU Extension – (231) 348-1770
Emmet County Office of Planning & Zoning – (231) 348-1731
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Gaylord – (989) 731-4920
Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Gaylord – (989) 732-3541



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Printed on Recycled Paper

*Layout & Design by Laura Cherven • Editorial Support by Richard E. Hitz • Illustrations by William B. Kurtz
Reference: Lakescaping for Wildlife and Water Quality, by Carrol Henderson, Carolyn Dindorf, and Fred Rozumalski*

Waterfront Landscapes



Designing Shoreline Greenbelts for Beauty & Water Quality



Shoreline Residents Enjoy Clean Water & A Beautiful Waterfront Landscape