

# NATURAL SHORELINE LANDSCAPES

## Do you live near a lake or stream?

**There are ways you can improve water quality and benefit wildlife on your property and the Otsego Conservation District can help!**



### What does the program offer?

Landowner assistance includes planning of a natural shoreline landscape including technical support. The Otsego Conservation District can provide design ideas to fulfill the needs of the landowner and education on how to implement the plan. Plant selection, plant stock, site preparation and overall maintenance are included in this program.

### The Planning Process

The first step is determining the needs of the property owner. The wants and needs (including financial, legal, recreational and aesthetic) must be assessed to develop an appropriate plan. A site inventory will be conducted to understand the existing site conditions. A base map describing these conditions will be developed.

Shoreline plans can be designed to attract wildlife species, improve or control stormwater management, provide shoreline stabilization and the creation of a riparian buffer zone. After developing a plan, site preparation and plant selection are the next steps. Plant selection is based on site conditions, the types of species desired by the landowner, cost and the design purpose of the property. Plan implementation includes finding professional help, access to resources for proper implementation, planting techniques and any other riparian buffer

The Otsego Conservation District is offering assistance to landowners interested in designing a buffer strip or greenbelt on their property. This is a 65% cost-share program available for Otsego County residents.

### What is a riparian buffer strip or greenbelt?

Buffer strips, also referred to as greenbelts, are strips of native plants along the shoreline of a lake or stream. They are designed to create a more natural landscape and provide a number of benefits.

### What are the benefits of a natural shoreline landscape?

Riparian buffers minimize polluted runoff by trapping sediment, lawn fertilizer and other debris. The long root systems of native plants aid in filtering out contaminants and stabilize the shoreline, ultimately reducing erosion and runoff into the water body. Native plants also require little watering or fertilizer, as they are adapted to our climate.

*“Nature is not a place to visit. It is home.”*

*~Gary Snyder*



RESIDENTIAL LAKE FRONT LANDSCAPE:  
NATURAL OR RESTORED BUFFER ZONES

**Find a balance between waterfront recreational activities and a more natural shoreline.  
Let us help you enjoy clean water and a beautiful waterfront landscape!**

Please call the Otsego Conservation District at (989) 732-4021 to learn more or email Kelly Draeger at [kdraeger@otsegocountymi.gov](mailto:kdraeger@otsegocountymi.gov).

