



Lakeside Landscapes

What is a Lakeside Landscape?

A buffer area adjacent to water ways and bodies that is retained in its natural state or similarly replanted using native species. An ideal landscape contains 4 levels of structure; trees, shrubs, groundcovers and a dead organic layer that covers non-vegetated spaces called duff.

Problems with storm water:

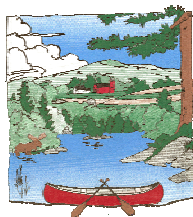
All forms land use on waterfront properties harbor several threats to lake water quality. Open and impervious surfaces like roofs, driveways, high-use spaces with compacted soil and lawns do little to stop the flow of storm water into lakes and streams. Large quantities of storm water can easily take up and carry loose particles for some distance. Most often these particles are composed of soil but grease and oil from cars, fertilizers, pesticides, pet waste, sewage and litter can just as easily be carried along. If the storm water is not slowed enough to allow the particles to settle out they, with the storm water, will enter the water body and degrade water quality.

Lakeside Landscapes and lake water quality:

Lakeside landscapes decrease harmful storm water impacts by a number of means. Properly maintained landscapes act as filters that slow the process of storm water and catch suspended nutrients and pollutants. Additionally, landscapes decrease the size of lawns thus minimizing the volume of storm water allowed to accumulate. The leaves of trees and shrubs intercept rainfall before they impact the ground loosening and taking up soil particles. The root system associated with landscapes also holds soil so there is less of a chance of erosion. Finally lakeside landscapes act as sponges. Storm water that passes into landscapes becomes trapped which allows some of it to sink into the ground or get used by plants thereby also decreasing the volume of surface water reaching water bodies after storms.

Benefits for property owners:

Lakeside landscapes also lend the property owner significant advantages, not the least of which being the increased water quality on their waterfront. Lakeside landscapes can be designed to frame scenic views while screening unwanted ones and take less maintenance than lawns, particularly when planted with native species. Property owners enjoy more privacy and less noise and wind. Ultimately lakeside landscapes increase property values by increasing water quality and the general aesthetic of the property.



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Planning your lakeside landscape:

1. **Check with your Code Enforcement Officer:** There may be Shoreland Zoning and NRPA permits that you need to obtain before doing any work on your waterfront.

2. **Know your property:** To have a successful and useful buffer you should find out the various properties of your land and what you want out of it:

- Know the soil
(clay, pH, organic content)
- Slope
- Sunlight vs. shade
- Water movement
- Desired views
- Paths/water access
- High vs. low maintenance
- Recreation areas



3. **Choosing the right plants:** While choosing what plants you want in your landscape you need to think about plant characteristics. For instance, is your property mostly sunny, mostly shady or mixed? Do you tend to have moist areas or particularly dry spots? These characteristics will limit what species of plants can be planted where in your landscape. Exotic ornamentals can produce vibrant and varied colors to your property but require higher maintenance than native species. If you wish to spend less time maintaining your buffer than your lawn, plant fewer exotics and more natives. Many native species produce amazing floral displays as well as attractive autumn foliage. Additionally, because native plants are adapted to the state's environment and already have some resistance to native pests, they have a higher probability of surviving to establishment.

4. **Get creative:** Lakeside landscapes can easily have a number of factors incorporated into them. Even when limiting plant selection to native species a landscape can contain early and late bloomers, wildlife attractants (bats, butterflies, etc.), berry gardens and can even be themed. Tailor your buffer to your own design.

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