

Restore Your Shoreline - Native Buffers

Native Buffer - A 12 foot wide strip that is planted to grasses and flowers to conserve soil and enhance wildlife. The grasses and flowers planted are native, meaning they have always been found in Minnesota prior to settlement.



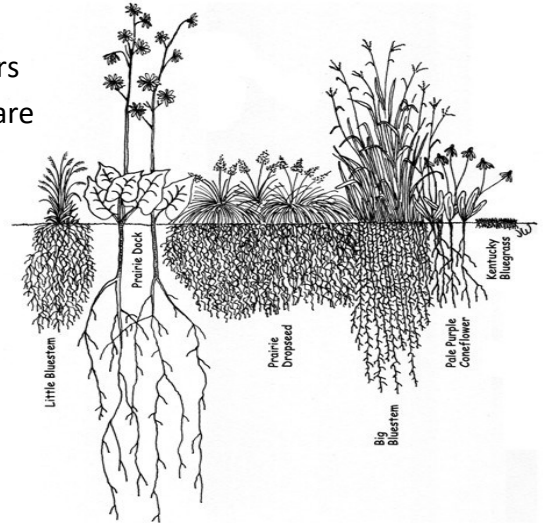
Wild Bergamot



Blanket Flower

Will it look nice?

Absolutely! But like with any planting, it will require some maintenance. There are several native flowers we use that are bright and showy, such as Wild Bergamot, Blanket Flower, or Purple Coneflower. It's important to know the buffer will look more natural than your typical flower garden. We typically plant 60% grasses and 40% flowers. Buffers are installed in the spring or fall, and are at least 12 feet wide (from the lake towards the house).



Why put in a buffer?

The native grasses and flowers used in a buffer have a much deeper root system than the typical short lawn grass. This deep root system helps hold your shoreline in place, slows erosion, and infiltrates any runoff from lawns or roads before it hits the lake. A buffer also creates habitat for wildlife, including butterflies and birds. Having trouble with geese? Geese don't like the taller grass!

What's the process?

A Shoreland Specialist will come out to your site and address erosion concerns, as well as any potential runoff that might be entering the lake. From there, the Specialist will create a design plan and a cost estimate using the information gathered from the site visit. The existing vegetation will be killed off in the project area - This is important because it reduces plant competition. Next a layer of seed (grasses & flowers) will be put down and live plants will be planted every 1.5 feet, as well as putting in any erosion control material if needed. Lastly, water about an inch every week and watch your buffer grow!

We design rain gardens, too!



Is there financial assistance available?

We may have cost-share available through the SWCD and/or your local lake association. Cost-share would provide reimbursement up to 75% of eligible costs. When you use cost-share, you agree to a contract which states the buffer will be maintained and functional for 10 years. The SWCD does site checks on years 1, 5, and 9.

For more information on native buffers, rain gardens, or funding, please contact the East Otter Tail County Soil & Water Conservation District:

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YOU LOVE OTTER TAIL'S LAKES, AND SO DO WE!

It's where we fish, cruise, and ski!

East Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation offers free technical assistance for shoreline restoration. **What's "technical assistance"?** It means a Shoreland Specialist will come out to your lakeshore with you and talk about where the water goes when it rains (commonly called stormwater) and we'll take a look at your shoreline to see if there is erosion occurring. Erosion and stormwater carry sediment and phosphorus into the lake, degrading water quality.

After we've talked about your shoreline, the Shoreland Specialist can create a restoration plan for your shoreline. Here at the SWCD, we promote a natural shoreline using grasses and wildflowers that are native to Minnesota. These perennial plants can handle our cold winters and are low maintenance, once established. Their roots go down 8 to 10 feet and the soil binds to these roots, creating a strong anchor for your shoreline when the waves come in or the ice pushes. Pollinators, such as honeybees and butterflies, use these native plants as a food source and for habitat.

We may have cost-share available for your project as well, which would reimburse you up to 75% of the eligible costs. **What's eligible for cost share?** Native plants, native seed mixes, biodegradable erosion control material (like a coir log or fiber matting), and labor to install these plants and materials. **What's not eligible for cost share?** Rip rap, turf/lawn grass, yard décor, retaining walls, and sand. If there's enough interest from lakeshore owners, the SWCD could apply for a grant specific and exclusive to your lake!

The first step is to call or stop by our office to set up a site visit with our Shoreland Specialist. We look forward to working with you!

