

Why are shoreline buffers important?

While shoreline buffers offer many advantages, the one that is emphasized here is their ability to decrease the entry of nutrients and soil into the water. Rain water and snow melt flowing across lawns pick up many things we don't want in the lake, including excess applied fertilizers, grass clippings, leaves, and soil particles. Once in the lake, these items contribute to the degradation of the lake by increasing the amount of nutrients that, in turn, promote the growth of excess aquatic plants and algae. Plants used in establishing a buffer typically have deeper root systems that will soak up more water and nutrients before they enter the lake.

Why do nutrients matter and where do they come from?

Lake Redstone has high levels of nutrients. Phosphorus is an especially important one because it causes the growth of aquatic plants and algae. The phosphorus in Lake Redstone comes from three major sources. The first is runoff from the watershed that enters via the inlet streams of Lake Redstone. The second is runoff that comes from residences surrounding the lake. Finally, phosphorus already in the lake is recycled as it is released from aquatic plants and algae as they decompose.

What can be done to limit nutrient entry into Lake Redstone?

The Lake Redstone Protection District has been working for many years to limit the entry of nutrients into the lake. We are continuing to work with farmers in the watershed to identify win-win solutions that conserve their soil and retain their fertilizer while protecting the lake. We also work with lake property owners who want to find ways to prevent the entry of nutrients and sediment into the lake from their property. The shoreline photos in this brochure show what some of your neighbors have done.

Where to get more information

Many resources are available to help Lake Redstone property owners create shoreline buffers. An internet search using the term "shoreline buffer" will yield many web sites with useful information. To assist Lake Redstone property owners we have placed several of the most useful brochures on our web site. To access them go to lakeredstonepd.org or use the QR code below, click on the heading "more" and then click on the "shoreline buffers" tab.

Get financial help from the Healthy Lakes Program

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has a grant program, Healthy Lakes, that can provide financial support of up to \$1,000 for property owners who want to create a shoreline buffer. "Native plantings" is one of five "best practices" that can be supported by this grant program. While the Lake Redstone Protection District must submit the grant application, the reimbursement funds go directly to land owners.

For more information go to healthylakeswi.com or look at the Healthy Lakes information on the LRPD web site. To add your project to a Healthy Lakes grant, contact the LRPD representative listed on our web site.

Lake Redstone



lakeredstonepd.org

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LOVE YOUR LAKE

Shoreline Buffers

- Why they are important
- How to improve your shoreline



Lake Redstone

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LAKE REDSTONE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Make a difference – create a shoreline buffer



Shoreline buffers offer many advantages, including slowing erosion and the flow of nutrients into the lake, providing diverse healthy habitats that attract birds and butterflies while acting as a barrier to discourage geese from visiting traditional lawns.

The easiest and least expensive way to create a shoreline buffer is to simply not mow along the entire shoreline. Turf grasses will grow 12-24 inches tall before going to seed, providing a layer of shoreland protection. Other plants, long-suppressed by continuous mowing, will likely also come back. Butterflies and birds may come back as well.

Creating a curving edge that separates the buffer from your lawn and any pathways to the water will give your shoreland a pleasant, natural appearance.

Adding native grasses, wildflowers, and shrubs to your shoreline buffer will increase its aesthetic appeal and enhance the wildlife benefits. There are many plants to choose from and help is available from local nurseries and greenhouses or many online resources. If you are unable to restore your shoreline all at once, adding a mixture of native plants over time can be a good alternative.

Use Native Plants

When restoring a shoreland it is far better to use plants native to Wisconsin than non-natives from other regions or countries. Avoid aggressive exotics such as purple loosestrife and glossy buckthorn. Using native plants does not mean residents have to settle for a dull shoreland. Many native plants are particularly attractive, with showy flowers, berries, interesting barks and branching habits, and they provide a number of other benefits. To begin selecting plants, visit some nearby natural areas to see what grows there. Copy Mother Nature because these plants have proven that they can survive with little care and are adapted to the local climate. Wildlife thrives on native plants as a source of food, shelter and cover.

Just a few of the many species of native plants that can be used in shoreline buffers:

Red Milkweed

Asclepias incarnate



Butterfly Weed

Asclepias tuberosa



Purple Coneflower

Echinacea purpureum



Prairie Phlox

Phlox pilosa

