

Living on a Waterfront Property



Why Are Shorelines Important?

The shoreline, where land, water, and air meet, is a vital link providing plants and wildlife the resources they need for life. We also rely on shorelines for sustenance. Communities have grown up along the water's edge and we continue to return to the shore to rest and restore our spirits. Those of us who live by water experience its magic every day. Our health and the long term value of our waterfront property depend on how we care for the shore - the "ribbon of life".

A naturalized shoreline is generally considered the best approach to protecting a lake or river's edge. Maintaining or planting a buffer zone of native plants along your shoreline will slow erosion, provide food and shelter for fish and wildlife species, and protect your property and investment. Best of all, natural shorelines

mean less work and more time to enjoy the water.

Roots from shrubs and trees absorb wave and ice energy, stabilizing soils and preventing erosion. Shrubs and trees discourage Canada Geese. This means you won't have to deal with their waste or have nuisance interactions with these birds. Plants along the shoreline slow surface runoff and filter contaminants before they reach the lake. Naturalized shorelines provide food and shelter for fish and wildlife species.

Easily Naturalize Your Shoreline

You can restore your shoreline inexpensively and with a minimum of effort. Let nature takes its course instead of spending endless hours struggling with erosion problems, retaining walls, lawnmowers and fertilizers.

First, measure and mark off a distance of at least three metres (ten feet) inland from the high water mark. Ten metres is an ideal distance, but three metres is a good minimum. This can be managed as a vegetated shoreline area. Next, do nothing - don't mow it, don't spray it with chemicals, don't fertilize it. Within a year of undisturbed growth, grasses and wildflowers will become established. Within two years, native shrubs and trees will begin to grow and birds, small mammals, frogs, and waterfowl will move into the area.

Similarly, aquatic vegetation should be preserved. These so-called "weeds" maintain water quality, and provide critical food and shelter for fish. Removal of aquatic plants for swimming or boating should be kept to an absolute minimum, and requires a permit to do so. Quinte Conservation can provide more information on shoreline naturalization.



Create a Landscaping Plan

You can create a landscaping plan for a more natural shoreline yourself, or by hiring a contractor. When making your plan keep in mind to use native species. Use nursery-grown plants from local sources for your planting project. When creating paths to the shoreline make sure they are angled across the slope to prevent erosion.

Keep Your Property a Natural Paradise

Here are some tips to keep your waterfront property natural and the waterways healthy:

- Keep the lot well-treed, never clear-cut.
- Protect shoreline vegetation; replant areas lacking shrubs and trees with native species.
- Start a buffer strip by leaving some grass uncut near the water.
- Build at least 30 metres away from the shore.
- Give clear instructions to your contractors and monitor their work.
- Avoid spilling fuels, antifreeze, paint thinner or other chemicals on land or water. Make sure to clean up fast.
- Don't use fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides near the water.
- Use only phosphate-free soaps, detergents and cleaners in your home.
- Pump out your septic tank regularly; at least every two to three years.
- Extend the life of your septic system by avoiding tank additives and minimizing water consumption.
- Refuel your boat with care, don't spill a drop.
- Watch your boat's wake, it causes erosion.

Aquatic Plants

Aquatic plant growth is something that many lakefront owners feel they have too much of. Aquatic plants play a key role in your lake's biodiversity, preventing erosion, and providing oxygen in the water. Aquatic plants support the insects that fish eat, and are a primary food and habitat source for birds. In addition, aquatic plants help stabilize loose sediment and are an effective natural breakwater, keeping waves from eroding the shoreline. Whenever possible, keep your shoreline vegetation intact and enhance it with shrubs and plants to create a natural buffer zone.

As a lake gets older, an accumulation of nutrients in the sediment can cause an increased growth in aquatic plants. This natural process can be sped up by pollution

and erosion. When a lake receives an overload of nutrients from fertilizer runoff, leaky septic systems, or erosion, aquatic plants and algae can grow out of control. Eliminating sources of pollution and reducing erosion can help to avoid the over-fertilization of plants in the lake.

Water temperature also has a profound effect on aquatic plant growth. Increases in water temperature can be caused by the removal of shoreline vegetation, which shades shallow waters from the heat of the sun. If the streams and rivers that feed a lake have unprotected banks, pre-warmed water entering the lake adds to the increase in temperature.

Controlling Aquatic Plant Growth

Cutting is an expensive and labour intensive method of controlling aquatic vegetation; it may not even be productive, as cutting can sometimes stimulate growth. Fragments left in the water can re-root and create a denser patch of vegetation than was originally there. In smaller areas, plants may be pulled out, rather than cut. Be sure to remove pulled plants from the water.

Toxic herbicides should be avoided. They might control aquatic plants quickly in the short term, but can be expensive, may have to be used often to be effective, and have negative side effects. Herbicides are especially discouraged within a wide area where anyone will be swimming, or where water intakes are nearby. Using these chemicals has health and environmental risks, and always requires a Ministry of the Environment and/or Parks Canada permit.

Maintain a lakeside buffer zone by using trees to shade the shores and tributaries. This can reduce erosion as well as stop any excess nutrients from entering the lake.

Planning to Develop Your Property?

Always check with Quinte Conservation before building or making changes to your shorelines.

You will require a permit if your project is adjacent to hazardous lands. Hazardous lands include areas subject to flooding, erosion, dynamic beaches and unstable soil/bedrock such as Karst. This can include, but is not limited to, watercourses or waterbodies, slopes, escarpments, and wetlands. Before you begin work near water or hazardous lands, contact Quinte Conservation.



Development is considered to be any site grading, construction of any kind, or any alterations to waterways, wetlands or shorelines. Development can include, but is not limited to construction or erection of buildings, bridges, culverts; straightening, deepening, dredging, a watercourse or the creation of ponds; installation of docks; changing the use of a structure; or the creation of a beach, boat launch or boathouse.

For More Information

Visit the [Landowner Resources page](#) on our website.

Go to www.quintecosnervation.ca and click on *Programs and Services* and then find *Landowner Resources*.

Common Shoreline Plants of Southern Ontario

Dry, Upland Areas

Trees

- Balsam Fir
- Sugar Maple
- White Birch
- White Ash
- White Spruce
- Red Pine
- White Pine
- Black Cherry
- White Oak
- Red Oak
- Burr Oak

Shrubs

- Serviceberry
- Chokeberry
- Grey Dogwood
- Common Juniper
- Creeping Juniper
- Ninebark

- Chokecherry
- Fragrant Sumac
- Staghorn Sumac
- Red Elder
- Swamp Rose

- Silver Maple
- Black Ash
- Green Ash
- Tamarack
- White Cedar
- Eastern Hemlock

Grasses and Wildflowers

- Canada Anemone
- Swamp Milkweed
- Canada Blue-Joint Grass
- White Turtlehead
- Water Willow
- Canada Wild Rye
- Boneset
- Joe-Pye Weed
- Closed Gentian
- Helen's Flower
- Cardinal Flower
- Giant Bur-Reed
- Prairie Cordgrass
- Common Vervain
- Blue Flag
- Marsh Marigold
- Swamp Candles
- Monkey Flower
- Golden Alexander

Grasses and Wildflowers

- Canada Anemone
- Heath Aster
- New England Aster
- Helen's Flower
- False Sunflower
- Switchgrass
- Black-Eyed Susan

Wet, Lowland

Areas

Trees

- Red Maple

Shrubs

- Speckled Alder
- Silky Dogwood
- Red Osier Dogwood
- Sweet Gale
- Bebb Willow
- Pussy Willow
- Shrub Willow
- Sandbar Willow
- Slender Willow
- Common Elderberry
- Meadowsweet
- Highbush Cranberry
- Nannyberry

Native Plant Suppliers

Friends of Lemoine Point

c/o Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority
1641 Perth Road, PO Box 160
Glenburnie, ON
(613) 546-4228
lemoine@cataraquieregion.on.ca

Fuller Native and Rare Plants

175 Airport Parkway East
Belleville, ON
www.fullerplants.com

Golden Bough Tree Farm

900 Napanee Road, PO Box 59
Marlbank, ON
godenbough@lks.net
www.goldenboughtrees.ca

Natural Themes

PO Box 738
Frankford, ON
(613) 398-7971
bheissler@kos.net
www.naturalthemes.com

Peterborough Green-Up

378 Aylmer Street North, Unit 4
Peterborough, ON
(705) 745-3238
greenp@greenup.on.ca

Prosperity Acres

266 Harmony Road
Corbyville, ON
(613) 477-1908
www.prosperityacres.com

Weese Tree Preservation

112 Park Drive, RR # 1
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