

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.



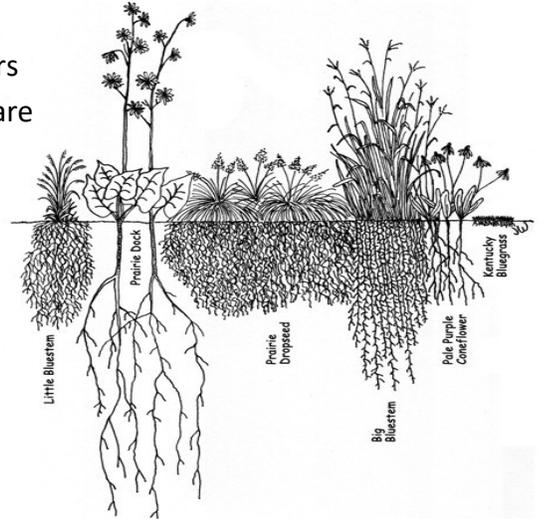
Wild Bergamot



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!



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

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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, 3, 5, and 9.