

How Does this Buffer Rank?

(the area of vegetation between a developed land and water body)



Four stars for significant veg in upland, transitional, emergent, and aquatic zones



Three stars for veg in upland, transitional, emergent, and aquatic zones— but no trees



One star for veg in upland zones— plants near shore were all weed-whacked



Improving Riparian Zones

- Avoid activities that cause bank erosion- like driving motorized vehicles
- Remove & stop the spread of invasive plants
- Maintain and plant native shrubs and trees
- Maintain fallen trees. Woody debris and rocky areas are very beneficial to a riparian habitat.
- Maintain a buffer strip of native vegetation— lawns are vulnerable to erosion, so leave room for native vegetation to grow between the lawn and



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This publication made possible by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Photos courtesy of Bay Mills Biological Services



Importance of Shoreline Vegetation



Protect the Vegetation, Protect the Water

Riparian areas are what link our water and land. They are the reason many plants and animals we depend on even exist.

Many people remove vegetation along their shoreline to create a swimming area, beach, scenic road, or open the view. But removing that vegetation comes at a cost. Removal of vegetation can lead to colonization by invasive species and degrading habitat for wildlife. It can also lead to erosion and decreased water quality.

We are lucky to have the beautiful UP to call home and it's our responsibility to Mother Earth to keep it that way.



RESPECT THE WATER, LEAVE ROOM FOR A VEGETATED BUFFER

Why a Buffer Makes for a Better Lake or River

- Reduces runoff velocity
- Trees shade the water, cooling it and keeping fish healthier
- Reduces shoreline erosion
- Provides habitat for small fish, amphibians, songbirds, nesting waterfowl, & the insects
- Reduces and filters runoff containing fertilizers/pesticides
- Improves water quality

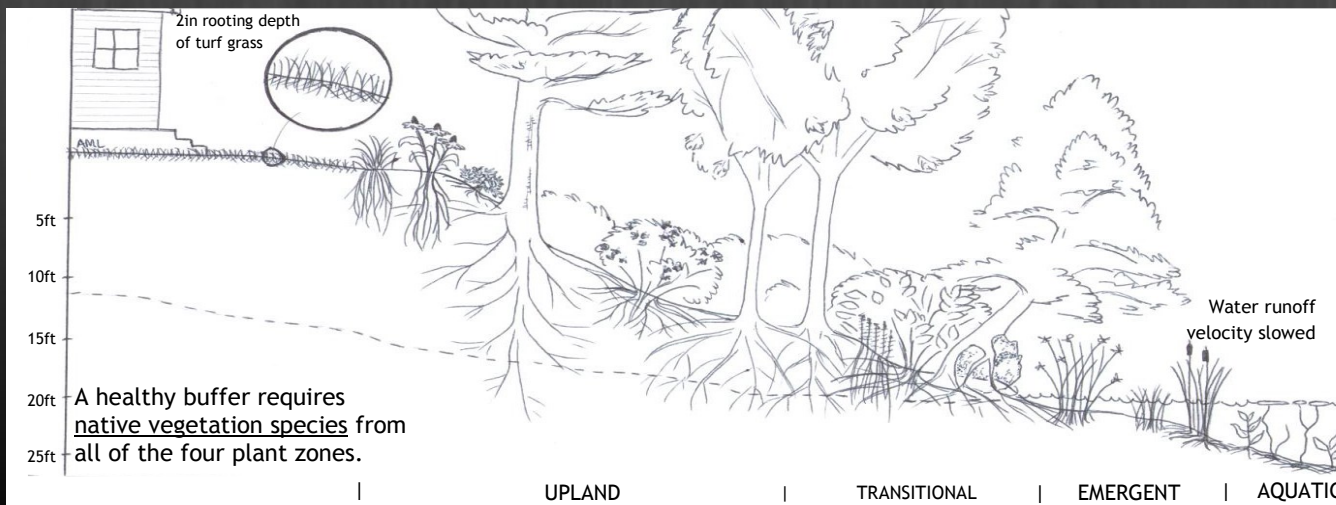
What Makes a Good Buffer?

SPACE: More is more. 35ft is the standard distance from water, but even a narrow vegetated

buffer is better than none. (35ft is often inadequate for large water bodies experiencing big storms.) **NATIVE PLANTS:** Mowed lawn only roots 2-3 inches deep, but many native plants, shrubs and trees have deep roots that stabilize the shoreline and even sand dunes.

Why not harden the shoreline with riprap or sea walls?

A hardened shoreline takes a direct hit from wave action. This increases erosion in front of the seawall. It also eliminates the fish spawning and fish nursery habitat that quiet, vegetated shallows provide. Ultimately, the seawall may fail. Water carves the Grand Canyon and crumbles the cliffs of the Great Lakes; water always wins.



Homeowners & Riparian Buffers

LAWNS & SHORELINES DON'T MIX



Mowed lawn 30+ feet from the water



Mowed lawn 3 feet from the water



Mowed lawn within inches of the water

Interested in improving your shoreline? Contact Biological Services for tips!