

# A Fresh Look at Shoreland Restoration



**O**ur canoe glides over the shallow waters of a bay, passing by dozens of saucer-sized nests excavated in the sandy bottom. Each nest houses bluegills guarding the eggs that hold their unborn young. The distinctive cry of an eagle fills the air and a great blue heron dips its beak into the clear water. A splash along the shore reveals a family of otters bobbing along the lakeshore in search of entertainment and a meal. The canoe continues slicing through the calm waters, past a log crowded with painted turtles competing for space to catch the morning sun. As the sun rises higher, the trilling of American toads gives way to the banjo-like strum of green frogs seeking attention from suitable mates. A gentle popping sound is evidence of fish inhaling a breakfast of insects off the water's surface. Near the shore a cluster of delicate blue flowers emerges on stalks surrounded by the glossy leaves of pickerelweeds. Beyond this splash of color, a stand of bulrushes and cattails marks the meandering shoreline. The breeze softly rustles through the maples that overlook the bay.

**S**ights and sounds such as these reflect the spectrum of life typically found on a healthy lake or river. Here, ecological systems provide food, clean water and habitat. Fortunately, waterfront property owners can restore or maintain many of the ecological functions of

their lakeshore if a shoreland buffer zone is established or maintained. These areas not only protect our lakes, they can actually solve many problems for homeowners. As an added bonus, this rich mosaic of vegetation, water and wildlife creates a highly desired landscape that

inspires our affections and increases property values. Our lakes are a place to live or vacation—for us they are a chosen landscape. For the wildlife that live there, however, our lakes are their only home. ■

## Additional Resources

*Lakescaping for Wildlife and Water Quality*—Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 1-800-657-3757

*Life on the Edge: Owning Waterfront Property*—Wisconsin Lakes Partnership, (715) 346-2116

*Rain Gardens (GWQ034)*—UWEX Publications, (877) WIS-PUBS (947-7827) or (WT- 731-2002)—Available from local DNR service centers

*The Water's Edge: Helping fish and wildlife on your waterfront property (FH-428-00)*—Available from local DNR service centers

*Through the Looking Glass: A Field Guide to Aquatic Plants (Item No. A12)*—North American Lake Management Society, (608) 233-2836

## Shoreland Stewardship Series:

This is the first fact sheet in the shoreland stewardship series. The entire series is available from the county UW-Extension offices, Extension Publications (1-877-947-7827), or Wisconsin DNR service centers. It is also available online at <http://clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs/shore>.

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