

# Butterflies, Turtles and Frogs – Oh, My!

The development of our lakeshores is almost complete. A 1965 study of northern lakes showed 25 percent of the shoreline developed. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources predicts that by 2025 more than 90 percent will be developed.

Building along shorelines can increase runoff of phosphorus and other pollutants that hurt lake water quality. But there's something every property owner can do to limit these impacts: Plant a buffer zone along the lakeshore – or preserve a natural buffer zone that's already there.

A buffer zone has bonus benefits beyond water quality: It is beautiful and provides a rich habitat for wild creatures.

A buffer zone is a strip along your shoreline – ideally at least 35 feet wide – that is planted with trees, bushes, natural grasses, wildflowers and ground cover. It restores natural lakeshore habitat that was lost to home construction.

You can keep a buffer zone and still have a lawn (if you want one). The trees and plants help stabilize the shoreline, limit erosion and keep the lake clear. They help filter out pollution. And they add to the natural beauty for which people buy lake and river property. The plants you choose can offer more visual appeal than a manicured green lawn – they impart color, texture and variety to the landscape.

A buffer strip is inviting to many wild creatures that prefer to live in sheltered areas near the water. Imagine being able to enjoy:

- **Songbirds, hawks and herons**
- **Turtles, frogs, snakes and salamanders**
- **Otters, minks and foxes**
- **Bees, butterflies and fireflies**

These and many more creatures will prosper in your natural waterfront setting. So, plant or maintain a buffer zone. Butterflies, turtles and frogs will say, "Oh my!"

**One in a series of articles sponsored by the Oneida County Lakes and Rivers Association ([www.oclra.org](http://www.oclra.org)). For more information, contact Bob Martini at 715-282-5896 or email to [webmaster@oclra.org](mailto:webmaster@oclra.org). OCLRA encourages the use and distribution of this material by lake associations, their members, and other parties concerned about water quality.**

***Did you know...***  
*The 30- to 40-foot strip around a lake's shore is called the "ring of life" for the rich variety of creatures that live there.*

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Lakes and Rivers Association