

Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip: A strip of land ranging between 25' and 50' of depth, beginning at the documented high-water level elevation, measured inland away from the water toward the developable area of a waterfront lot, in which the natural vegetation shall not be disturbed except to add a mixture of planted trees and low growing woody shrub species native to the area and suitable for the site.

High-Water Level Elevation: For Lake Charlevoix this is the highest water level elevation for Lake Michigan/Huron as recorded by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (currently 582.35' IGLD recorded in October 1986), plus one (1) foot. For Walloon Lake this level is the elevation of the outlet dam or as set by the courts, plus one-half (1/2) foot. For all other lakes and streams this level is the 100-year flood plain elevation plus one-half (1/2) foot. (Note: The High-Water Level Elevation shall be measured from that point upland from the body of water where the natural grade first exceeds the High-Water Level Elevation, unless a Shoreline Protection Structure, as defined, is present, in which case the Shoreline Protection Structure shall serve as the High-Water Level Elevation.)

Section 3.06 – Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip

- A.** To enhance protection of water quality, when any of the developments listed in this subsection occur on waterfront lots or site condominium projects which do not presently have a Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip meeting the requirements of this section, a Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip shall be established and maintained as a required condition for site plan approval. The following developments will require the Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip:
- Reconstruction of an existing structure, or;
 - Changing the spatial dimensions of an existing structure, or;
 - Enclosing portions of any building, or;
 - The addition of new structures, or;
 - The granting of any variance.
 - Construction of new, or reconstruction/alteration of existing, seawall or shoreline protection structure.
- B.** A Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip shall meet the following specifications:
1. The Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip shall be located between the water's edge and all structure(s), except docks, shoreline protection structures, and waterfront-viewing platforms as allowed in the district regulations.
 2. The minimum depth shall be twenty-five (25) feet and shall extend across the full width of the waterfront portion of the lot, except that the depth shall be fifty (50) feet for lots with steep slopes as identified on the Evangeline Township Shoreline Steep Slopes Map (Figure 3-2). (effective April 21, 2010)
 3. The Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip shall be located upland from the High-Water Level Elevation as defined.
 4. The Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip shall be planted with a mixture of trees, which at maturity shall obtain a minimum height of 50 feet, and low growing woody shrub species native to the area and suitable for the site. Trees shall be scattered throughout the strip, planted at a minimum of ten (10) trees per one hundred feet (100') of lake frontage, and sited in a manner that allows for "filtered" views of the water from the dwelling. Tree species shall be of a sufficient size and caliper (minimum 2") to compete with the surrounding vegetation, and shall provide coverage of 75% of the area within the Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip as measured at the drip lines the trees are expected to have at maturity (for guidance, see Figure 1 in this Section). Shrubs shall be of sufficient size and planted at spacings that shall provide complete coverage of the ground within the Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip, except as allowed in district regulations for a viewing platform and path, within a period of two (2) full growing seasons. (amended: November 5, 2019)

5. No lawn shall be maintained between the Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip and the water's edge.
 6. No supplemental plant nutrients shall be allowed in the Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip.
 7. No sand or fill shall be placed between the shoreline and the Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip.
 8. All required plantings in the Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip shall be completed by the end of the next full growing season after the approval date of the project. (e.g. Projects approved before May 20th must be planted by October 5th of that year. Those approved after May 20th have until October 5th of the following year.) In the event of circumstances beyond the applicant's control which cause an unavoidable delay to planting, the Planning Commission may grant an extension of up to one year when requested by the applicant and deemed warranted by the Planning Commission. Such circumstances shall not include any that are due to the applicant's personal or economic hardship.
 9. Temporary structures, including but not limited to, docks and boat hoists, which are removed from the water for the off-season winter months, shall not be stored within the Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip.
- C. See Section 5.11 Schedule of Regulations for alternative maximum impervious surface coverage options. (effective April 21, 2010)
- D. The Planning Commission may waive or modify the requirement for installation of a new Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip upon a finding that existing vegetation meets the standards of a Natural Vegetation Waterfront Buffer Strip. (amended: August 4, 2009)
- E. Notwithstanding any other provision in this ordinance, any existing vegetation within the area of the required natural vegetation buffer strip shall be preserved whether or not the vegetation meets the specifications found in Section 3.06.B. **No existing vegetation, living or dead and including stumps and root systems, within the required natural vegetation buffer strip area may be removed without site inspection and written approval from the Zoning Administrator.** The requirements in this subsection shall not be construed as preventing vegetation which does not comply with the standards of Section 3.06.B from being replaced with new vegetation to increase compliance with Section 3.06.B. (amended: November 13, 2018)



Figure 1--Example of a Natural Vegetation Shoreline Buffer Strip
(Source: Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council)

See also: [GREENBELT PLANTING](#)