

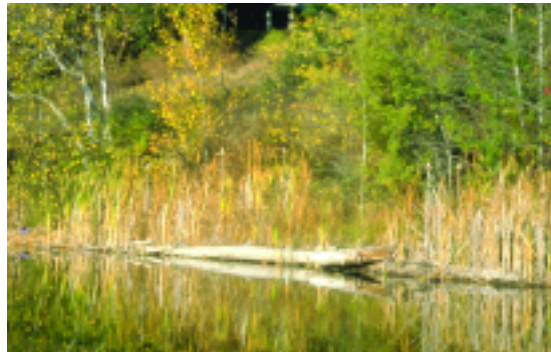
VIEWPOINTS

- ▶ **Viewpoints are the Conservation Authority's point of view on some of the everyday environmental issues and situations people find themselves in along the Rideau.**
- ▶ **Visit our website @ www.rideauvalley.on.ca or contact our Landowner Resource Centre at 692-2390 for more information.**
- ▶ **Check out helpful Extension Notes at www.lrconline.com**
Related notes include:
 - *Preserving Water Quality*
 - *Preserving and Restoring Natural Shorelines*
 - *Buffers Protect the Environment*
 - *Restoring Shorelines with Willows*

Shorelines

Shorelines and waterfronts are the single most important part of the entire water ecosystem. This unique space, balanced between shallow water and dry land, is ecologically the best of both worlds. Natural shorelines teem with life. Like a watery jungle, the light, the heat, the moisture and the food all add up to a rare piece of environmental heaven.

Aquatic plants, insects, amphibians, fish, birds and mammals all find shorelines very hospitable. For hundreds of species, the shorelines are breeding grounds, nurseries, food sources, shelter and hiding places. These sensitive and unique shoreline areas have often been called the "Ribbon of Life" because as much as 90 per cent of living things in the lake or river are found along its shallow margins.



The land along the shoreline is also the best and cheapest buffer against declining water quality. Pollutants like lawn fertilizer and pesticides running off the land can be trapped and absorbed by the vegetation protecting the water quality of the lake itself. The shoreline plants also act as a buffer against wind, wave and erosion. They modify destructive forces, help keep the soil undisturbed and the water clean. Well-dressed shorelines are the kidneys of the lake

and have been doing their work 24/7 for thousands of years. Most new municipal Official Plans are recognizing the value of a minimum 30 metre band of natural vegetation along our shores.

There is simply no replacement for the beauty and function of natural plant communities along the shores of our lakes and rivers. Disturbing these long-established communities often means lower water quality, fewer birds and animals, and a loss of economic as well as scenic value.

Unfortunately, one of the first things new shoreline landowners sometimes do is "clean up" the shoreline inadvertently making the first step towards the long slow cumulative march to a

degraded lake, river or watercourse. A much better idea is to follow your parents advice and start respecting your alders.

There are environmentally friendly ways of viewing the lake and having a modest dock area without clear-cutting the property. Please call the LandOwner Resource Centre at 692-2390 or 1-800-387-5304 for personal, professional, free help for your shoreline. Natural shorelines are naturally the best.