



Natural Shoreline Outreach Plan Framework

June 3, 2026

Shorelines with natural vegetative cover are more resilient to erosion and loss of land. The Comfort Lake–Forest Lake Watershed District (CLFLWD) worked with Moore Engineering to identify barriers to natural shoreline buffer adoption among residents within the CLFLWD specifically. This plan provides a framework for a public engagement campaign to increase adoption of natural shoreline buffers. The District began implementation of this campaign, with support from Moore Engineering in 2025.

The Natural Shoreline Education and Outreach Campaign successfully increased awareness of shoreline restoration and established a strong foundation for future engagement. Through consistent messaging delivered across multiple channels, including the Natural Shorelines webpage, videos, mailings, workshops, and home visits, CLFLWD improved public understanding of the benefits of natural shorelines and identified effective strategies for encouraging homeowner action.

A key lesson from the campaign is that behavior change rarely occurs through a single interaction. Residents are most likely to move toward shoreline restoration when they experience multiple touchpoints over time that build personal relevance, trust, and understanding. Interest-based workshops, such as loon and wildlife programs, proved particularly effective at creating emotional connections to the lake and serving as an entry point to broader shoreline stewardship conversations. The campaign also demonstrated the value of local examples, homeowner testimonials, and personalized assistance in reducing uncertainty and motivating action.

Public Engagement Plan

Goal

Increase adoption of natural shoreline buffers by moving shoreline property owners from awareness to implementation through sustained, multi-channel engagement.

1. Maintain a Seasonal Outreach Cycle

Utilize existing campaign assets to provide year-round engagement opportunities:

- **Spring:** Mailings, website promotions, and home visit invitations focused on project planning and cost-share opportunities.
- **Summer:** Workshops, demonstration tours, and video content highlighting active restoration projects and wildlife benefits.
- **Fall/Winter:** Success stories, homeowner testimonials, and planning resources to prepare residents for future projects.

2. Continue Interest-Based Workshops

Offer workshops that connect shoreline restoration to topics residents already care about, such as:

- Loons and wildlife habitat
- Pollinators and native plants
- Fishing and lake stewardship
- Water quality and recreation

Use these events as a gateway to introduce shoreline restoration concepts and available assistance programs.

3. Expand Multimedia Outreach

Continue leveraging:

- The Natural Shorelines webpage as the primary information hub
- Educational and testimonial videos
- Direct mail campaigns
- Social media and digital communications
- Home visit materials and follow-up resources

Ensure every communication includes a clear next step, such as requesting a home visit or applying for cost-share assistance.

4. Highlight Local Success Stories

Develop an ongoing library of:

- Before-and-after photos
- Homeowner testimonials
- Short video interviews
- Demonstration project profiles

Featuring local residents helps normalize shoreline restoration, builds trust, and makes projects feel more achievable.

5. Strengthen Personalized Assistance

Continue offering home visits and one-on-one consultations that provide:

- Site-specific recommendations
- Technical guidance
- Cost-share information
- Project planning support

These trusted interactions remain one of the most effective methods for converting interest into action.

6. Measure and Adapt

Track:

- Website traffic and engagement
- Video performance
- Workshop attendance
- Home visit requests and conversion rates

- Cost-share applications and completed projects
- How participants learned about the program

Use this information to continuously refine outreach efforts and focus resources on the communication channels that generate the greatest participation and restoration outcomes.

Expected Outcome

By combining consistent messaging, interest-based programming, personal outreach, local success stories, and ongoing evaluation, CLFLWD can build on the momentum generated by the campaign and continue making natural shoreline restoration a visible, accepted, and community-supported practice that improves shoreline habitat, water quality, and lake health throughout the watershed.