

Water WoRDs

Updates from the Water Resources Division

A Shore Thing to Protect Water Quality

While Michigan is surrounded by Great Lakes, we in the Water Resources Division (WRD) also keep a close eye on the thousands of inland lakes that make up our rich water resources: over 11,000 inland lakes greater than five acres in size. With Michigan's abundance of inland lakes, waterfront property is important to both human residents and local wildlife. The shoreline and shallow water areas of a lake provide essential habitat for many fish and wildlife species. The biggest threat to shorelines, and hence the biggest threat to a lake's overall health, is overdevelopment. Overdevelopment decreases fish and wildlife habitat on the land and in the lake and allows more nutrients and sediment to get into lakes. Studies show that Michigan's inland lakes have excellent water quality overall, although there are a few identified problems. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Lake Assessment, the ***number one threat to inland lakes is poor lakeshore habitat.***

The Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership (MNSP) was formed to tackle this threat in 2008. The MNSP's mission is to promote the use of natural landscaping and erosion control to protect Michigan's inland lakes. This is a public-private partnership consisting of governmental agencies, industry associations, industry representatives, academic institutions, and environmental and nonprofit organizations actively engaged in promoting natural shoreline management.

Over the past four years, the MNSP has been working hard to develop and implement different programs and policies to meet the following four objectives:

1. Train contractors and landscape professionals in shoreline technologies and bioengineered (more natural) erosion control.
2. Educate property owners about natural shorelines and technologies that benefit lake ecosystems.
3. Research, demonstrate, and develop natural shoreline technologies that benefit lake ecosystems.
4. Encourage local and state policies that promote natural shoreline management.



A trained crew installing a Demonstration Site.
Photo by: Jane Herbert MSU Extension

The *Certified Natural Shoreline Professional* (CNSP) training program was developed to establish knowledgeable professionals that homeowners can go to for help to implement lake-healthy solutions for their shorelines. To receive certification, participants must participate in three days of classroom training, a field day and pass an exam. In addition, there are continuing education requirements that CNSPs must complete to maintain their certification. The first two classes were held in 2010 and to date there have been 145 participants that have successfully completed this program. Check out the [CNSP listing](#) to find one in your area.

The *Shoreline Educator Network* (SEN) training program was developed to train natural resource professionals across the state to conduct homeowner natural shoreline workshops. This is a one day workshop to help participants understand the MNSP message, challenges, and where to go for help. Participants receive a toolkit of information that provides them with what is needed to conduct their own workshops for local lake associations and other interested groups. There have been five workshops held in two years with a total of 116 participants. Check out the [SEN public listing](#) to see who may be available to conduct workshops in your area and stay tuned for updates as more participants are added.

Want to help us spread the WoRD on natural shorelines? It isn't too late to register for upcoming MNSP-sponsored events!

CNSP Training:

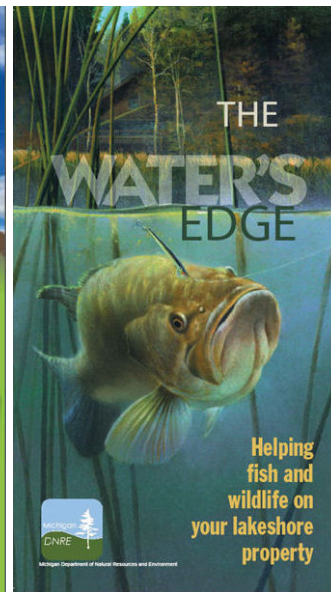
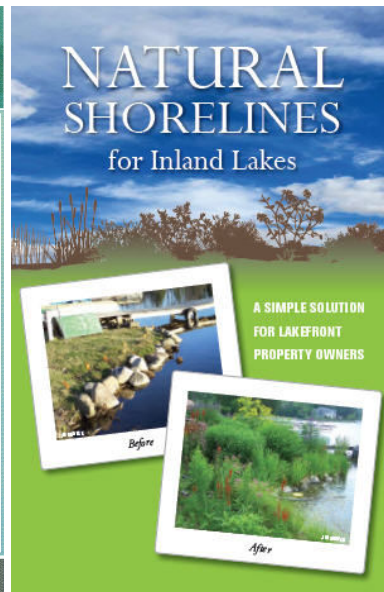
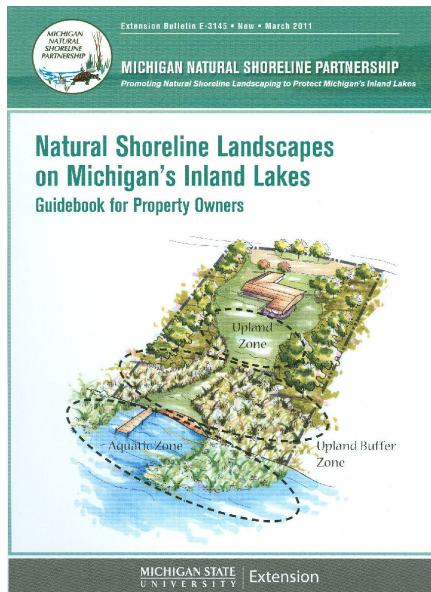
- February 5-7, 2013 (Paw Paw, MI) with mandatory field day on June 5, 2013 (Paw Paw, MI)
- February 19-21, 2013 (Brighton, MI) with mandatory field day on June 6, 2013 (Also in Paw Paw, MI)

Shoreline and Shallows Conference:

- March 6, 2013, 9am - 4pm Kellogg Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

For more information on these workshops and the [Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership](#) please check out the Web site.

For those unable to attend an event or simply interested in more information about natural shorelines, links to some of the educational materials used by the MNSP are available for free download in the [MNSP Library](#) or by clicking on each image. In addition, the book *Natural Shoreline Landscapes on Michigan's Inland Lakes: Guidebook for Property Owners* is available for purchase for \$25. All others are available for free download. Links are available. Hard copies of the free materials are available by contacting [non-point program staff in local district offices](#).



What do you do in the WRD?

Meet Julia Kirkwood

I have worked in the WRD's Non-Point Source Program for 11 years. Before coming to the DEQ, I worked in a variety of natural resource-related positions throughout the Great Lakes. My current position mainly involves managing pass-through grants that are awarded to local watershed partners. These grants are helping to restore and protect Michigan's rivers and lakes that have been harmed or threatened by polluted runoff. I am also a co-chair for the MNSP Outreach and Education Sub Committee. I really enjoy working with so many different organizations committed to protecting water resources and love to see all the creative ways each organization builds relationships and partnerships in order to integrate solutions at the local level.

I am constantly amazed with Michigan's beauty and enjoy watching my kids experience it too. They catch frogs, dig through mud, learn to canoe/kayak on their own, get scared by crayfish swimming into their legs, and even attempted a polar bear dip on the Muskegon River in February! My wish is for more people to help their kids experience Michigan's woods and water to gain a deeper connection to our remarkable natural resources. I am proud to have a role in helping to ensure our lakes and rivers are clean and safe for all sorts of play!



Julia Kirkwood