HLF Greenbelt 50/50 Match Program

A successful shoreline greenbelt is more than simply planting native flowers. The goal is to create a living shoreline buffer that protects the water, stabilizes soil, absorbs runoff, and provides habitat—while still allowing reasonable lake access.

Key Components of a Shoreline Greenbelt

1. **Native vegetation**

    - Native trees, shrubs, grasses, wildflowers and aquatic/wetland plants
    - A mix of deep-rooted and fibrous-rooted plants
    - Plants selected for the specific conditions: wet/dry, sun/shade, sandy soil, slope, etc.
    - Ideally, use Michigan-native species rather than ornamental cultivars that provide less ecological value.

2. **Multiple layers of vegetation** - A strong greenbelt generally has three layers which creates a much more effective buffer than a row of flowers or plants alone.

    - Canopy: appropriate native trees
    - Mid-story: native shrubs
    - Ground layer: native grasses, sedges and wildflowers

3. **Erosion control**

    Where a shoreline is actively eroding, vegetation alone may not be enough. Appropriate greenbelt projects may incorporate:

    - Coir logs/coconut fiber logs
    - Coir erosion-control blankets
    - Biodegradable erosion-control materials
    - Strategic native plantings within and around those materials
    - Proper grading or slope stabilization where needed

4. **Healthy soil**

    Soil preparation can be an important part of establishing vegetation, particularly on disturbed or heavily compacted shorelines. Depending on the site, this could include:

    - Appropriate topsoil necessary to establish the greenbelt (not for general landscaping)
    - Compost or other approved soil amendments
    - Proper grading
    - Avoiding excessive fertilizer

5. **Seeding**

   Native seed mixes can be an excellent and relatively economical way to establish a greenbelt, particularly over larger areas, such as:

   - Native seed
   - Site-appropriate native seed mixes
   - Temporary erosion-control materials needed to establish the seed

6. **Runoff management**

   One of the most important functions of a greenbelt is intercepting water before it reaches the lake, in order to capture sediment, nutrients, and other pollutants before they enter Higgins Lake. Considerations include installing:

   - Vegetated swales – a gently sloped channel with dense plants to collect runoff and guide it away from the lake
   - Rain gardens
   - Downspout redirection
   - Deeper vegetation along drainage paths

The following describes what is covered under the HLF 50/50 match grant program.

Category	Examples	Eligibility
Native Vegetation	Plants, shrubs, trees, grasses, sedges, wildflowers	☑ Yes
Erosion & Establishment	Coir logs, coir blankets, coconut fiber, rip rap, native seed	☑ Yes
Soil & Site Preparation	Topsoil and soil preparation for greenbelt area only	☑ Yes, with limits
Water Quality Improvements	Rain gardens, swales, runoff diversion	☑ Yes

Note: It is the responsibility of the property owner to purchase, plant/install, and maintain their greenbelt and property.
