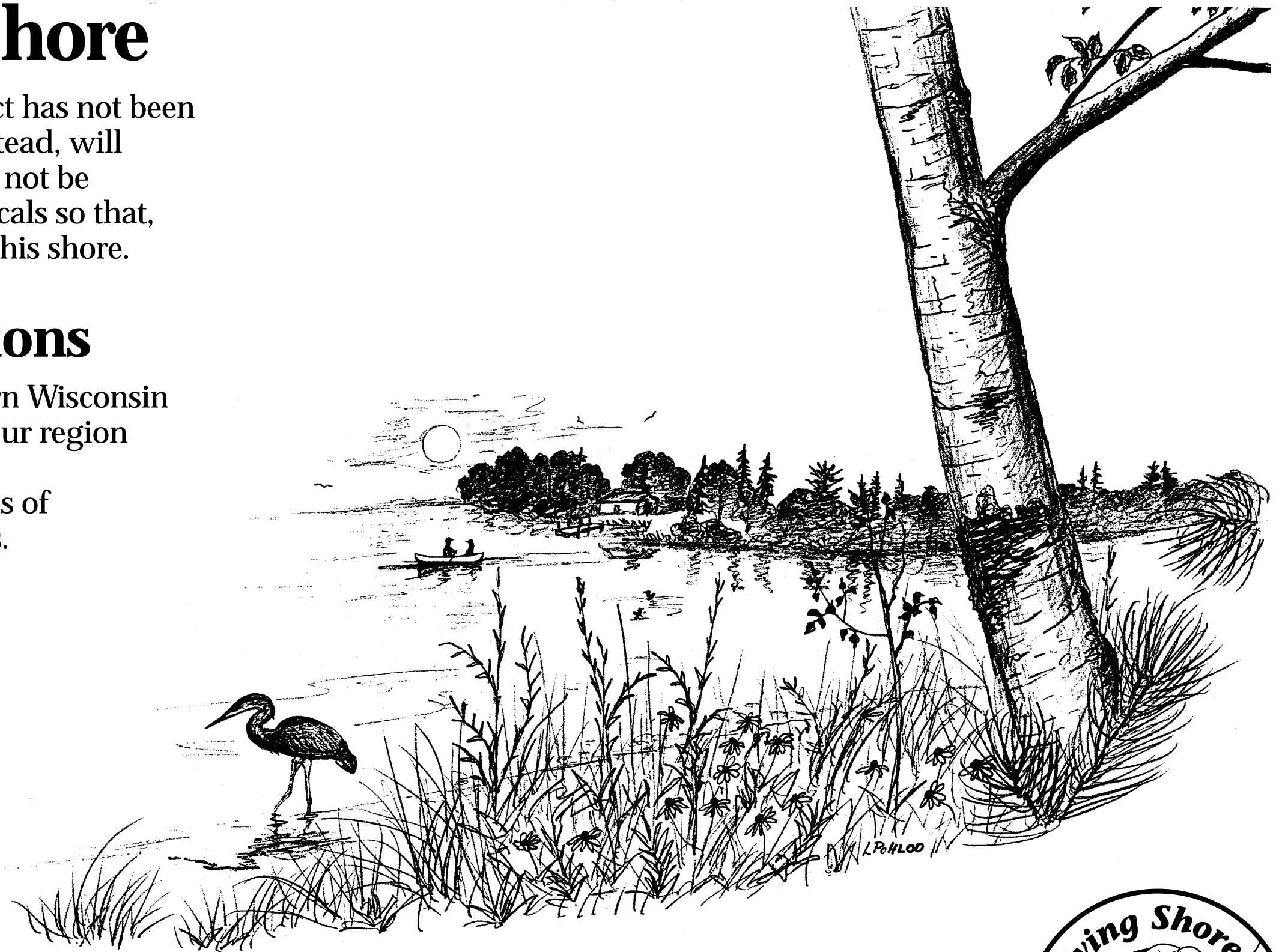


# The Changing Shore

Look around you. This part of the project has not been planted with natural vegetation but, instead, will remain a “no mow” area. The grass will not be mowed, fertilized or treated with chemicals so that, in time, natural vegetation will reclaim this shore.

## Northwoods Connections

For many residents and visitors, northern Wisconsin means woods and water. People value our region for its natural beauty reflected in clean, sparkling lakes ringed with scenic stands of pine, birch and other plant communities. By allowing the shore to return to natural vegetation, landowners can help restore and protect the character of the Northwoods for future generations.



**TIP**

*The no-mow approach to shoreline restoration is an easy, no cost alternative for landowners. Simply stop mowing a strip at least several yards wide along your shoreline and wait for the natural vegetation to return. Be patient! A variety of native plants will begin to revegetate the site over time.*



# Habitat is Home

The living shore is home to many kinds of wildlife. Its brushy vegetation, small trees and leafy plants provide shelter for songbirds, small mammals, insects and other animals. Many species nest or raise their young here along the shoreline. And the fruits, leaves and seeds of these plants are important sources of food for wildlife, as are the insects and other small creatures that live here. This shore, then, provides the food, shelter and water – **the habitat** – that wildlife needs to survive.

## Aquatic Habitat

Aquatic wildlife species (*those that live in the water for at least part of their lives*) find abundant habitat along natural shorelines. The plant stems and woody debris that fall into the lake provide habitat for aquatic insects which in turn attract fish, turtles and frogs. Other plants are rooted in the lake bottom and also provide food and shelter for aquatic wildlife.

## Shoreland Habitat

Terrestrial wildlife species (*those that live primarily on land*) find homes along the shoreline, too. Mammals such as mink muskrats and even deer use natural shorelines as travel corridors and places to find their food. Native songbirds including warblers, vireos and thrushes nest, feed and find shelter in the vegetation. And, other birds like ducks, geese and loons also frequent the living shore. Unlike the groomed lawn, the diversity of plant species here provides an abundance of wildlife habitat.



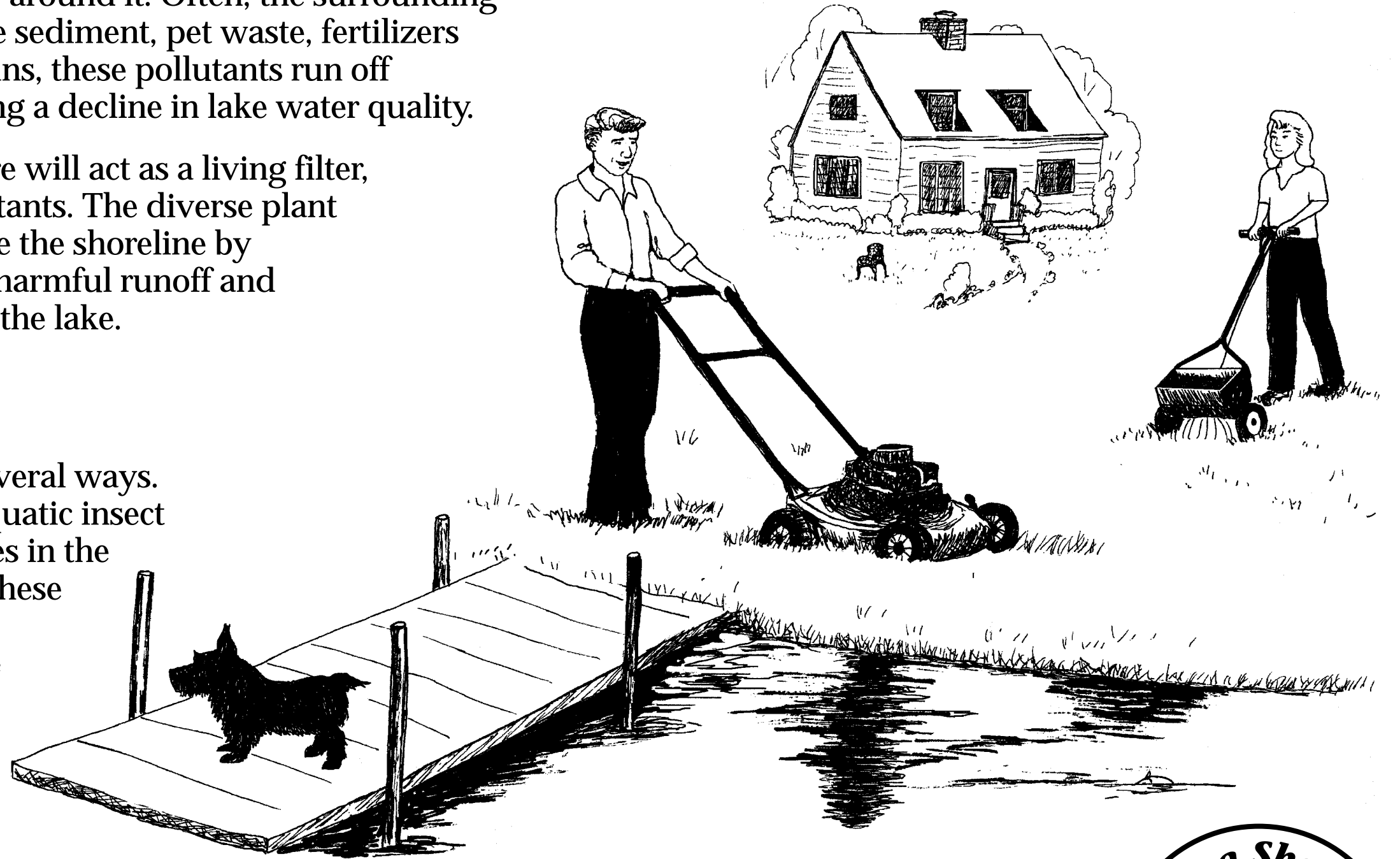
# Living Filters

A lake mirrors the activities that occur around it. Often, the surrounding landscape is a source of pollutants like sediment, pet waste, fertilizers and lawn chemicals. During heavy rains, these pollutants run off developed areas and into lakes, causing a decline in lake water quality.

The natural vegetation along this shore will act as a living filter, buffering the lake from harmful pollutants. The diverse plant community will not only help stabilize the shoreline by preventing erosion, but will also trap harmful runoff and enable it to settle out before it reaches the lake.

## Runoff Facts

Runoff can impact water quality in several ways. Sediment, for instance, may reduce aquatic insect and fish reproduction, causing declines in the fish and wildlife species that feed on these organisms. Nutrients from soil, lawn fertilizers and pet waste may promote excessive growth of algae and aquatic plants (the “green lake” syndrome), creating an unstable ecosystem and hindering some recreational activities.



**TIP**

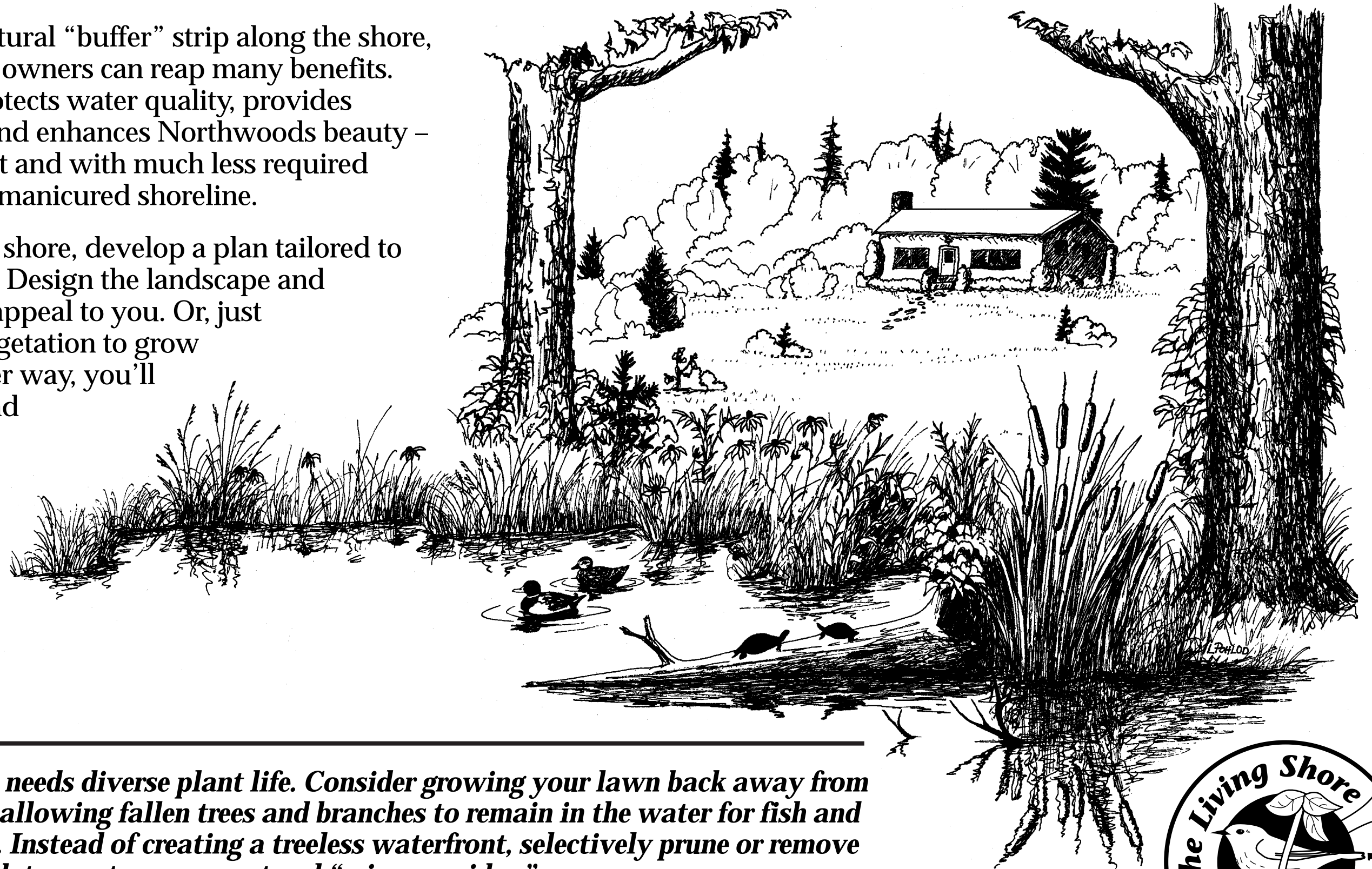
*Local soil studies show that additional phosphorus (a plant nutrient) is not necessary to grow a healthy lawn. So, if you do fertilize your lawn, consider using a “low or no phosphorus” fertilizer containing 2% phosphorus or less. Remember, keep our lakes clean, not green!*



# It's Up to You!

By maintaining a natural “buffer” strip along the shore, waterfront property owners can reap many benefits. This living shore protects water quality, provides homes for wildlife and enhances Northwoods beauty – all for little to no cost and with much less required maintenance than a manicured shoreline.

To restore your own shore, develop a plan tailored to your individual site. Design the landscape and select plants which appeal to you. Or, just allow the natural vegetation to grow near the water. Either way, you'll be doing yourself and your lake a favor.



**TIP**

*A living shore needs diverse plant life. Consider growing your lawn back away from the shore and allowing fallen trees and branches to remain in the water for fish and turtle habitat. Instead of creating a treeless waterfront, selectively prune or remove trees and brush to create a more natural “view corridor.”*

*For more information on protecting and restoring the living shore, contact the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Vilas County U.W.-Extension or your local landscape professional.*

