

*Littoral Zones provide  
food and shelter for  
waterbirds and other animals.*

## Littoral Zones

### What are they and what do they do?

The shallow down-sloping shelf of a lake or pond is commonly referred to as the lake's "littoral zone". The zone is an area where the water meets the land. Plants here support wildlife such as wading birds, turtles and crabs.



*Turtles spend hours basking in the sun.*

Littoral Zones are crucial components of healthy ecosystems, hence are protected by law. A primary function of a planted littoral zone is to absorb pollutants from water that ultimately drain into our canals and rivers, particularly water generated from storms. Littoral zone vegetation also prevents shoreline erosion. Since 1985, Martin County has required that a percentage of each lake, pond, or stormwater retention pond be established as a littoral zone.

Well functioning littoral areas are aesthetically pleasing, add habitat for wildlife and increase property values.



## MARTIN COUNTY

Board of County Commissioners  
2401 S.E. Monterey Road  
Stuart, Florida 34996-3397

Doug Smith, District 1  
Dennis H. Armstrong, District 2  
Lee Weberman, District 3  
Elmira R. Gainey, District 4  
Michael DiTerlizzi, District 5  
Russ Blackburn, County Administrator

---

*This brochure provides you with  
some interesting facts about the  
Littoral Zones of Martin County,  
Florida.*

---

Environmental Division  
A Growth Management Department Publication  
[www.martin.fl.us](http://www.martin.fl.us)



Martin County's

# Littoral Zones

*What are they  
and what do they do?*



# Examples of Marsh and Littoral Shelf Plantings

## Healthy lakes are good lakes

A balanced, healthy lake will easily support healthy plants and wildlife. A balanced lake will require little maintenance and few (if any) chemicals. Not only will the lake's littoral zone be aesthetically pleasing but its improved water quality will help reduce foul odors and excessive mosquitoes.

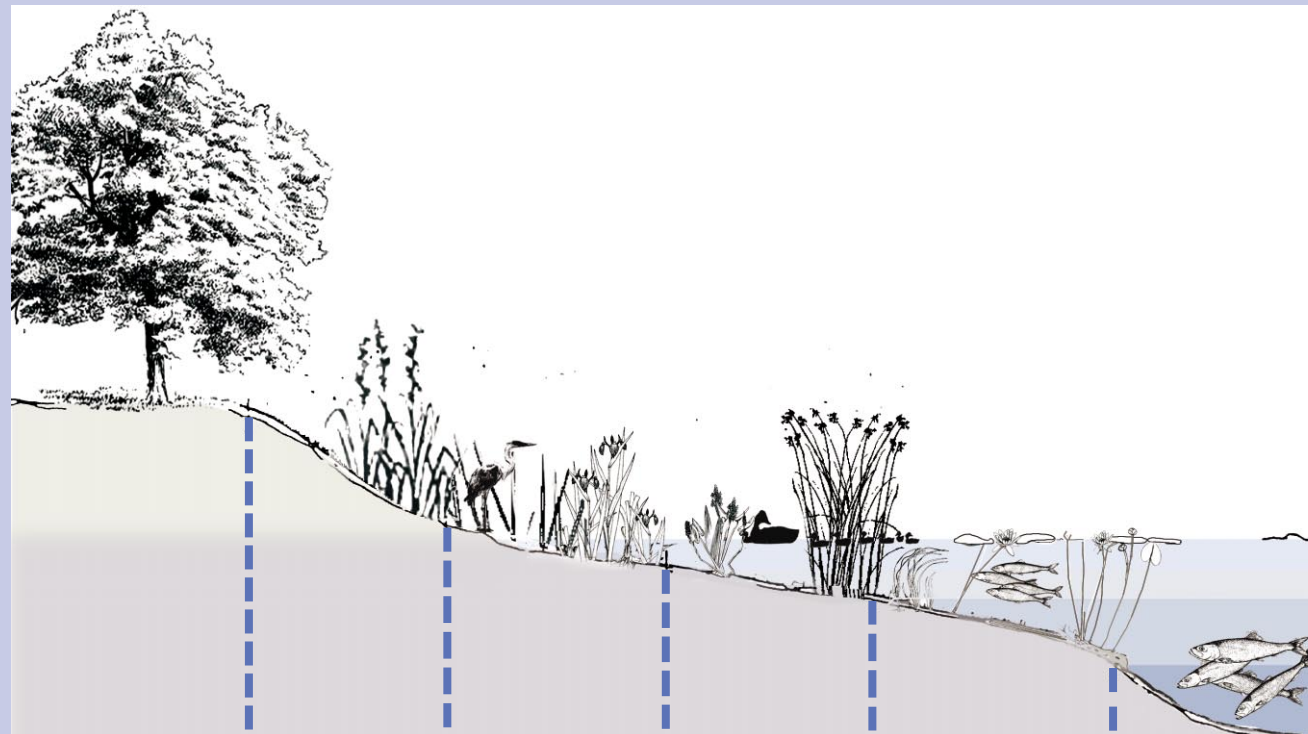
The information in this brochure will help guide the property owner in fulfilling the obligation to plant a successful littoral zone.








Butterfly feeding on Buttonbush flower

To create an aesthetically pleasing zone, the hearty plants listed in the diagram to the right are suggested. More detailed information is available at your local public library or from the following organizations, to name a few:

- IFAS, Center for Aquatic Plants, Circular 912 Aquascaping
- Association of Native Plant Nurseries
- Native Plant Society of Martin County



| Upland  | Transitional   | Shallow   | Mid  | Deep  |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| Above +1.5'   | +1.5' to +0.5'   | +0.5' to -0.5'  | -0.5' to -3.0'   | -3.0' to -5.0'  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red Maple<br/><i>Acer rubrum</i></li> <li>• Bald Cypress<br/><i>Taxodium distichum</i></li> <li>• Swamp Bay<br/><i>Persea palustris</i></li> <li>• Sweet Gum<br/><i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buttonbush<br/><i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i></li> <li>• Sand Cordgrass *<br/><i>Spartina bakeri</i></li> <li>• St. John's Wort **<br/><i>Hypericum spp.</i></li> <li>• Sawgrass *<br/><i>Cladium jamaicense</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue Flag Iris *<br/><i>Iris virginica</i></li> <li>• Golden Canna **<br/><i>Canna flaccida</i></li> <li>• Soft Rush **<br/><i>Juncus effusus</i></li> <li>• Spikerush **<br/><i>Eleocharis cellulosa</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrowhead<br/><i>Sagittaria lancifolia</i></li> <li>• Pickerelweed<br/><i>Pontederia cordata</i></li> <li>• Soft-stem Bulrush<br/><i>Scirpus validus</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soft-stem Bulrush<br/><i>Scirpus validus</i></li> <li>• Fragrant White Lily<br/><i>Nymphaea odorata</i></li> <li>• Spatterdock<br/><i>Nuphar luteum</i></li> <li>• Tapegrass<br/><i>Vallisneria americana</i></li> </ul> |
|    |    |    |   |    |
| Red Maple   | St. John's Wort  | Blue Flag Iris  | Pickerelweed   | Fragrant Lily   |

\* Can grow in permanent water  
\*\* Endures flooding



Gallinule



Limpkin



Dragonfly



Green Heron