



Designing Your Landscape



The Second Step in Developing a Streambank or Shoreline Landscape

Now that you have assessed your property it's time to think about your objectives for your streambank or shoreline. The table below can help you get started in designing your landscape.

Possible objectives	Tips
Prevent erosion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep existing native vegetation ■ Use vegetation to cover any bare areas ■ Plant appropriate native plants in riparian zones
Correct existing erosion problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Determine the cause of erosion ■ Seek professional assistance to fix severe erosion problems
Spend less time doing yard work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The more property you plant in a natural landscape, the less time you will spend mowing and doing other yard maintenance activities
Screen undesirable views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Plant trees and shrubs that will block undesirable views or hide unappealing structures
Improve your view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Select plants with growth characteristics that will enhance nice views ■ “Frame” your view with large trees ■ Select plants that provide seasonal color (blooms in spring or summer; colorful foliage or berries in fall; or unusual bark patterns or colorful stems in winter)
Increase privacy and reduce noise from lake users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Build a wall of vegetation to reduce noise and increase privacy
Create windbreaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Locate trees and shrubs to block cold winter winds and funnel summer breezes
Attract wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Select plants that provide food and shelter for the types of wildlife you want to attract

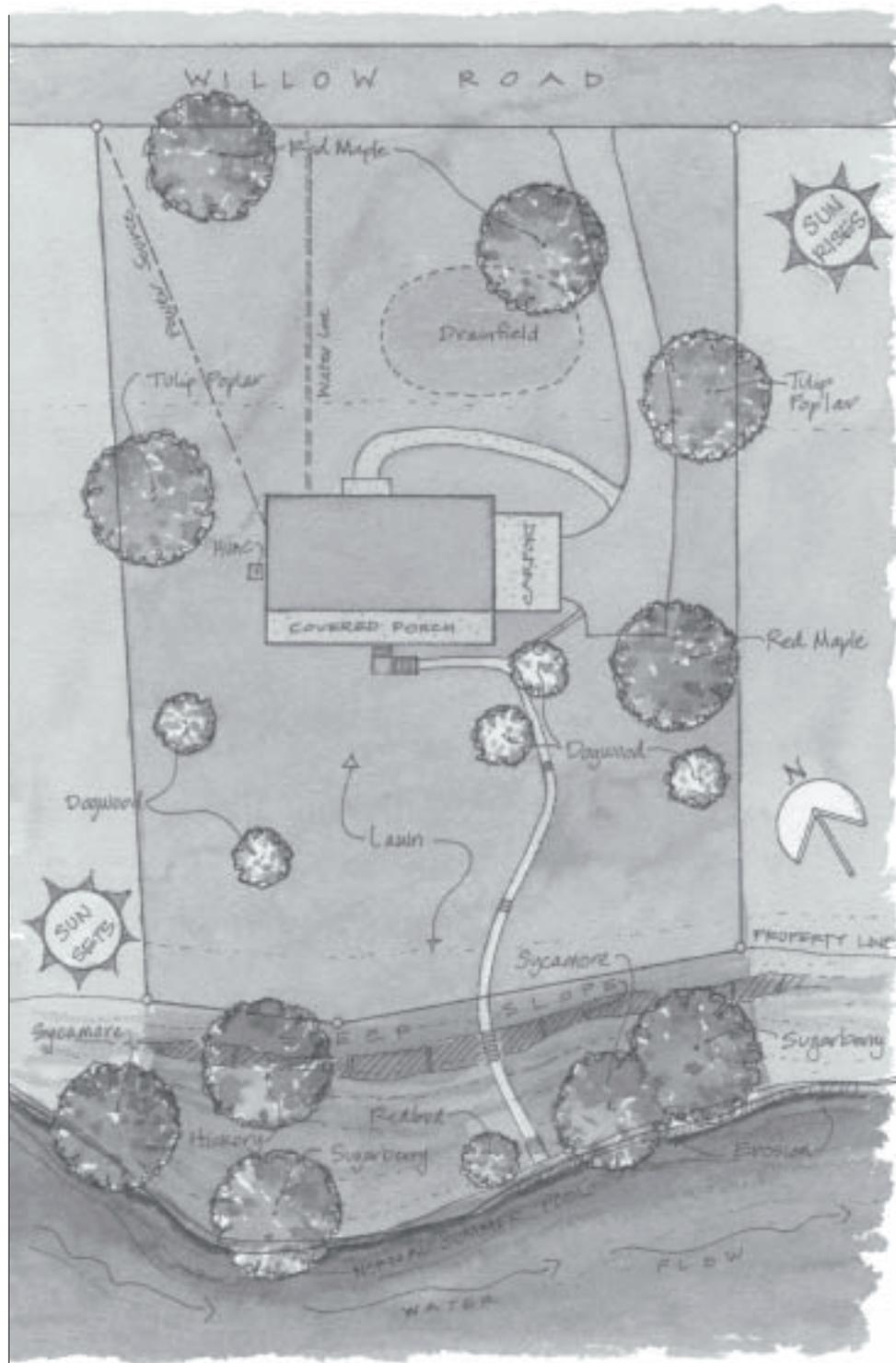
Once you have assessed your property and know your objectives, then it is time to begin a landscape plan.

Sample Landscape Plan

The following sample landscape plan takes into consideration the existing conditions and the property owner's objectives to determine plant selection and placement. Before beginning any work on the site, apply for permits if necessary.

Assessment of Existing Conditions

- A few trees along shoreline and scattered throughout yard
- Lawn maintained to water's edge, including the steep bank
- A strip of public land between private property and water
- Steep slope on public land has several small critically eroding sites
- Minor erosion along water's edge
- Property receives at least 8 hours of mostly hot, afternoon sunshine a day
- Property is located in the eastern part of the Tennessee Valley



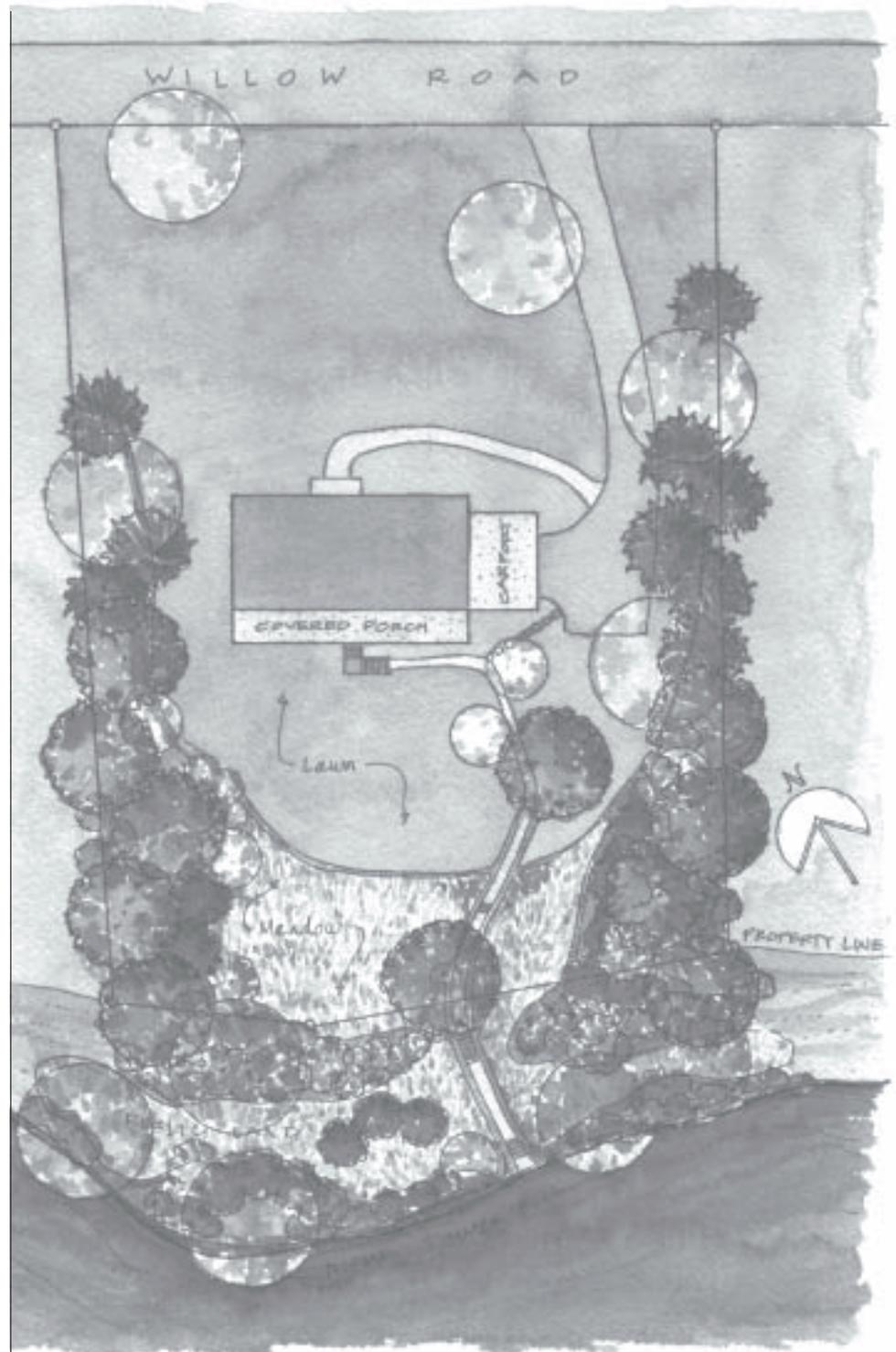
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Objectives for the Site

- Prevent erosion
- Spend less time doing yard work
- Increase privacy and reduce noise from reservoir users
- Attract wildlife

Meeting the Objectives

- Plant native trees and shrubs to control erosion along steep eroding sites and along the shoreline.
- Convert existing lawn into flowering meadow to reduce maintenance and attract songbirds and butterflies.
- Plant trees to create a wall of vegetation to reduce noise and increase privacy.



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Drawing Notes:

- *Circles drawn on "sample plan" indicate existing trees*
- *The bigger the symbol used for the plant, the larger the species (biggest = large trees; medium = small trees or large shrubs; smallest = small shrubs)*

Remember:

- Make the riparian zone as wide as possible to maximize the benefits.
- Plants that spread quickly are better at stabilizing the soil, especially on slopes and along the water's edge.
- Plant groups of large and small trees and shrubs. Even if planting the same species, select several different sizes for a more natural appearance.
- Examine a nearby forested area with conditions similar to those on your property (sunlight, moisture, etc.) and identify native plants thriving there. These plants should be suitable for your property.
- Imitate nature by varying the heights and distance between plants, and by not planting in straight lines.
- Plants have different characteristics that can be utilized to create seasonal color and interest by selecting species that have unusual bark patterns, spectacular fall foliage, or showy flowers.
- Try to anticipate what is likely to happen in the future: the property across the water offers some beautiful views today but may be sold in 10 years for a subdivision—you might want to go ahead and plant some trees in areas that will eventually provide the most screening.
- Place bluebird nesting boxes around meadows.
- Install birdbaths and feeding stations—once you fill them it is important to keep them filled, especially in winter.
- Do not mow the meadow in the fall; flower and grass seeds are an important food source for songbirds throughout the winter. Mow, if necessary, in late winter/early spring before new growth sprouts.
- Establish meadows where you want to maximize views.
- Plant shade-loving wildflowers in moist areas once trees are large enough to provide shade.
- Don't plant aggressive, spreading plants in areas that do not allow room for growth.
- Use evergreens to screen views year-round and deciduous trees where screening is important, especially in the summer.
- To see glimpses of the water, plant tall-growing trees so that eventually you will see under the canopy. Also, plant in groups; space between trees can be planted with low-growing shrubs and groundcovers.
- Shade-tolerant species can be planted on north- or northeast-facing slopes even if there is no shade.
- South- and west-facing slopes are usually hot and dry.
- By referring to wildlife publications, you can select plants that provide food for the species you want to attract. If a species has more than one life stage, be sure to provide for each stage (e.g., caterpillars and butterflies). Shelter can be provided by simply leaving fallen limbs on the ground, piling up brush, or planting really thick vegetation.
- The steeper the slope and the further from the water's edge your house is located, the taller a plant can grow before it obstructs your view.

