

BLCA Lake Conservation Program – History

*** Gentle Footprint Conservation and Native Plant Program ***

Program and Projects to date:

The BLCA has promoted lake improvement and supported conservation efforts for a long time. We have used our own resources in addition to obtaining grant funding from other agencies to help property owners pay for lakeshore restoration and runoff control projects. This work began in 2000 with a total of 60+ projects completed on the four lakes so far! These have included shoreland restorations, run-off control, and rain gardens. Funding sources have included the Minnesota DNR, Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District, and Elk River Watershed Association in addition to projects funded solely by the BLCA. We also developed a Plant Bank program to provide replacement plants for property owners who have lost native plants through erosion or winter kill.

All projects have used native (deep-rooted) plants to slow the flow of rainwater and allow it to absorb into the soil to reduce pollutants and nutrients flowing into our waters.

2023-24 Program

Last year in addition to the BLCA-funded Gentle Footprint Program, we were able to partner with the Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) in a combined SWCD Cost-Share/BLCA Gentle Footprint program. The SWCD has said they plan to continue the Cost-Share program in the future.

The "Class of 2023-24" consisted of twelve projected projects on Briggs, Elk, Julia and Rush Lakes – some of which will have joint funding and some are BLCA funded only. Detailed planning is occurring now with planting to follow in early summer of 2024. See future issues of The Lake Report and the BLCA website for updates on these projects.

BLCA Lake Plant/Conservation Program - Future

2024-25 Programs

We want to hear from property owners who would like to do conservation projects with planning activities in the fall of 2024 and winter of 2025 and planting in the spring and early summer of 2025. Three funding options are available.

Option One: SWCD & BLCA Cost-Sharing Program

- SWCD will pay up to \$5,000 with 65% match plus BLCA will pay up to \$1,500 with 30% match.
- Visit www.sherburneswcd.org for more details.
- Contact Shelly at 612-283-8362 or sdreimer@frontier.com with questions and indicate interest.

Option Two: BLCA Gentle Footprint Program

- BLCA will pay up to \$1,500 with 50% match (in-kind labor allowed at \$15/hour).
- Contact Shelly at 612-283-8362 or sdreimer@frontier.com with questions and indicate interest.

Option Three: BLCA Healthy Lakes Plant Bank Program

- BLCA will pay up to \$200 for each grant which can be used to purchase native plants or seed mixes from our partner, MN Native Landscapes (MNL) (www.mnlcorp.com).

Which program to choose?

It depends... Talk with Shelly and we will compare the two programs and determine which is best for you and your project.

Please note that:

- Participants must be BLCA Sponsors.
- All plant materials must be native species.
- Projects may be rain gardens, shoreline restorations and/or other run-off control and must improve water quality by controlling erosion and reducing sediment.