



RIPARIAN BUFFER ORDINANCE Green Oak Charter Township



Green Oak Charter Township was invited to serve as a pilot community to customize, adopt, and implement a model Riparian Buffer Ordinance that was developed by the Huron River Watershed Council and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Carlisle/Wortman Associates assisted the Township in modifying the model ordinance so that it worked with their current set of regulations, and within the Township's cultural context.



The ordinance coordinates regulations with the Natural Rivers Act, as the Huron River, and several tributaries that flow through the Township are designated as "natural rivers" by the State. Requirements within the ordinance are designed to protect water quality and the ecological integrity of the Huron River, which provides drinking water to over 150,000 residents. The main features of the ordinance define building setbacks from the high water mark or edge of bluff, and require a 100 foot wide, naturally-vegetated buffer from the edge of the river or stream. The vegetated buffer is divided into three management zones, and various vegetation "targets" are defined for each zone of the buffer, transitioning from most natural at the water's edge, to a more managed state near the built portion of the site.



Other provisions of the ordinance include a prohibition on using synthetic fertilizers or pesticides near the water, similar to the State's new fertilizer law that will become effective in 2012.

