**BUFFER LANDSCAPING ADVISORY SERVICE TEAM (BLAST)**

Initial assessment questions / things to think about

Property owner:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address (#, street, town and zipcode): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Email:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**BLAST objective:**

* To educate the Smith Mountain Lake community of the importance of protecting the lake from sediment and from man-made products such as fertilizers, weed killers, bug repellant, bug killer, road salt, etc. washing into the lake as a result of heavy rains or natural erosion.
* To further educate regarding the positive steps that can be taken to eliminate or at least lessen the effects of those products through the use of buffer landscaping, that is, creating a buffer zone between the water’s edge and the living space on your property that will absorb and/or filter the unavoidable run-off, particularly on the many steep lots located around Smith Mountain Lake.

**Our mantra: Slow the flow……filter the flow**

1. **Are you familiar with the location of your 800’ contour on your shoreline?** This is helpful to know at our meeting for planning purposes, and should be found on a plat plan of your property.
2. What would you like to do with your landscape?
   1. AEP compliance issues within 800’ countour
   2. Reduce maintenance
   3. More natural look
   4. Solve run-off issues
   5. Other ……….
3. How do you use your yard now and what uses would you like for your yard?
   1. Activity areas
   2. Access to lake
   3. Gardens
   4. Other ……….
4. Do you have any special interest in using your garden to **attract** wildlife such as birds, butterflies, hummingbirds, native pollinators, etc.?
5. Are **deer resistant** plantings of special interest to you?
6. Will you use a landscaper/designer, or do you plan to do the majority of the work yourself?
7. Will you be getting help for planning, planting, plant selection, environmental impact knowledge, etc. ?
8. Have you thought about or decided on a timeline or budget for the project?
   1. Full scale project at once vs. phased in project plan
   2. Landscape only, or as part of other construction or expansion projects such as buildings, hardscape, dock?
9. What are your goals for the finished landscape?
   1. Long term maintenance considerations
   2. Expansion in the future
   3. Environmental impact – i.e. going green
   4. AEP mitigation compliance
10. What are your expectations from this home visit?
    1. Identify potential problem areas of run-off or wash-out
    2. Brainstorm with team members for potential solutions i.e. buffer garden, rain garden, berms or terraces, dry stream beds, etc.
    3. Discuss the use of native plant species and the advantages of using same
11. How did you hear about the Buffer Landscaping committee and the BLAST team?

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Creating a buffer garden on your property can help combat erosion, beautify your shoreline and increase your property value. Real estate agents are seeing a desire for properties with a beautiful “framed view” of the lake as opposed to an unobstructed sweep of lawn. BLAST team members will work with you to identify potential problem areas, guide you towards sources to help make planning and planting choices, and identify local businesses that can help. This will be a low-key, low-pressure, non-judgmental visit to answer your questions and concerns.

**BUT**…..we are not landscape experts or landscape architects. We can’t plan your garden, pick out your plants, or show up with picks and shovels. We are concerned homeowners like you who want to educate about the responsibility and the techniques for maintaining water quality at Smith Mountain Lake and the surrounding waterways.