

LAND DISTURBING ON SHORELAND AREAS

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Can I level out my lake property?

Land disturbing activities are not allowed within the Shoreland Buffer Area - which is the area within 35' from the shoreline – unless a property owner is re-establishing or expanding the vegetative buffer area. If this is the case, a permit must be issued and a buffer restoration plan must be completed.

Land disturbing is not permitted on slopes $\geq 45\%$.

A zoning permit is required for land disturbing activities which are within 300' of the shoreline and which there is any of the following:

1. Any filling or grading on slopes of more than 20%
2. Filling or grading of more than 1,000 sq. ft. on slopes of 12% to 20%
3. Filling or grading of more than 2,000 sq. ft. on slopes of 0% to 12%

Can I install/replace a retaining wall on my property?

If a retaining wall was less than 75' from the water and was installed on a property before April 1971 or if it was properly permitted by the Zoning office since 1971, the retaining wall may be replaced at the same length, height and location that it presently is.

If the wall was less than 75' from the water and was not properly permitted, it cannot be replaced. Other options include:

1. Bioengineered solutions. Also known as soft armor, these types of products such as Envirolok and Geoweb, use plastic or fiber, along with soil and plants, to create a stabilized wall for vegetation to grow on. This product can be permitted with a simple grading permit.
2. Grading, sloping and seeding. Some walls were installed merely for aesthetic reasons and once they are removed, the area may be able to be regraded and seeded without armoring.
3. Applying for a variance from the Board of Adjustment. If neither of the above options are possible, and hard armor is the only way to stabilize an area, a property owner will need to apply for a variance and must show why the soft armor method would not be feasible, along with unique property features and protection of the public interest. The hard armoring will need to meet NRCS requirements and the vegetative buffer will need to be maintained/restored.

Can I install riprap along the shoreline on my property?

A permit will be required from Rusk County Zoning if the waterbody is not an area of special natural resource interest. If the water is designated as an ASNRI, a permit is required from WI DNR. If more than 200' of shoreline will be affected, a WI DNR permit is required. Check with the Zoning office to find out what agency will be issuing the permit.