

FACT SHEET
SHORELAND VEGETATION ALTERATIONS
CARLTON COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE #27

WHY IS IT REGULATED? Alterations of vegetation and topography are regulated within shoreland to prevent erosion into public waters, reduce excess nutrients like phosphorous and nitrogen from washing into the lake, preserve shoreland aesthetics and historic values, prevent bank slumping, and to protect fish and wildlife habitat. The preservation of existing native vegetation and soils are a priority in shoreland. A list of vegetation native to Carlton County can be obtained at the Planning and Zoning Office.

Did you know:

- ☞ That when there is precipitation, water will evaporate, run off the land, or soak (infiltration) into the ground. The amount of vegetative cover on the ground will significantly impact the amount of runoff and infiltration.
- ☞ Natural Shoreline: 40% evaporation, 50% infiltration and 10% runoff. Disturbed/Mowed Shoreline: 55% runoff, 30% evaporation and 15% infiltration.
- ☞ Runoff can erode shorelines and carry nutrients, like phosphorus, to the lake. A lawn up to the water's edge can cause 7 times the amount of phosphorus and 18 times the amount of sediment to enter the water compared to natural shorelines.
- ☞ Phosphorus is the key nutrient needed for aquatic plant and algae growth. When excessive phosphorus reaches the lake, it fuels the overgrowth of aquatic plants and algae. Excessive plant and algae growth decreases water clarity, interferes with recreational use of the lake, and diminishes oxygen for fish.

DEFINITIONS:

ORDINARY HIGH WATER LEVEL (OHWL): The boundary of public waters and wetlands is the elevation delineating the highest water level which has been maintained for a sufficient period of time to leave evidence upon the landscape. This point is commonly where the natural vegetation changes from predominantly aquatic to predominately terrestrial. For rivers and streams, the OHWL is the elevation at the top of the bank of the channel.

SHORE IMPACT ZONE: The shore impact zone is the land located between the ordinary high water level (OHWL) of a public water and a line parallel to it at a setback of 50% of the structure setback.

LAKE ACCESS AREA: The lake access area is an area no wider than 33% of the lot width, or 40 feet, whichever is less, and no deeper than 25 feet from the OWHL.

VIEWING CORRIDOR (Red Clay or Bluff Zone): The viewing corridor in a red clay or bluff zone is an area than may not exceed 15% of the lot width, or 25 feet, whichever is less.

VIEWING CORRIDOR (outside Red Clay or Bluff Zone): The viewing corridor outside a red clay or bluff zone is an area than may not exceed 25% of the lot width, or 40 feet, whichever is less.

CARLTON COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE #27 - Article 4, Section 5, Subd. H 10A:

This section of the ordinance regulates the alteration and removal of vegetation effective March 1, 2005. If your lawn along the shore was created before this date, but you wish to revegetate to these standards, call the Planning and Zoning Office for guidance and possible grant opportunities.

All vegetation alterations are subject to the following conditions:

- ☞ The screening of structures, vehicles, or other facilities as viewed from the water, assuming summer, leaf-on conditions, is not substantially reduced;
- ☞ All cutting is done by hand or human means and shall not be done by heavy equipment;
- ☞ Erosion and stormwater control methods are implemented according to guidelines of the Soil and Water Conservation District.
- ☞ Removal in excess of the limitations is allowed when vegetation is replaced with native species that have more ecological benefit, prevent erosion, or add more screening values. A revegetation plan must be approved by the County Zoning Administrator prior to work.
- ☞ After-the-fact alterations will require submittal of, and adherence to, an approved restoration plan that mitigates the extent of the violation.

The following summarizes restrictions on shoreland alterations and vegetation removal:

SHORE IMPACT ZONE: The shore impact zone is the land located between the ordinary high water level (OHWL) of a public water and a line parallel to it at a setback of 50% of the structure setback.

AREA A - LAKE ACCESS AREA: The lake access area is an area no wider than 33% of the lot width, or 40 feet, whichever is less, and no deeper than 25 feet from the OHWL. This area may be cleared to access the lake. This area must include water-oriented accessory structures (such as a boathouse). Docks, lifts and landings are located within this area, at the water's edge. All cleared areas must be stabilized with native vegetative ground cover (except exposed bedrock areas).

AREA B - VIEWING CORRIDOR (Red Clay or Bluff Zone): The viewing corridor in a red clay or bluff zone is an area that may not exceed 15% of the lot width, or 25 feet, whichever is less. The area must include facilities (such as stairways and landings) and clearings for lake access. Within this corridor, 1/4 of the trees greater than 5 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH) and 1/3 of the trees and shrubs less than 5 inches in DBH may be removed. All cleared areas must be stabilized with native vegetative ground cover (except exposed bedrock areas). On properties where the lake access area has been cleared, the number of trees and shrubs removed from the lake access area shall count toward the allowable tree/shrub removal in the viewing corridor.

OR

AREA C - VIEWING CORRIDOR (outside Red Clay or Bluff Zone): The viewing corridor outside a red clay or bluff zone is an area that may not exceed 25% of the lot width, or 40 feet, whichever is less. The area must include facilities (such as stairways and landings) and clearings for lake access. Within this corridor, 1/4 of the trees greater than 5 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH) and 1/3 of the trees and shrubs less than 5 inches in DBH may be removed. All cleared areas must be stabilized with native vegetative ground cover (except exposed bedrock areas). On properties where the lake access area has been cleared, the number of trees and shrubs removed from the lake access area shall count toward the allowable tree/shrub removal in the viewing corridor.

AREA D: Between the shore impact zone and the building setback line, 50% of the trees greater than 5 inches in DBH and 100% of the trees or shrubs less than 5 inches in DBH may be removed.

AREA E: No restriction on vegetation removal.

