

Chippewa County Shoreland Zoning Summary

This summary does not represent the entire contents of the Chippewa County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance or other applicable rules. For more detailed requirements, contact the Chippewa County Department of Planning and Zoning or refer to the Code of Chippewa County at www.chippewacountywi.gov; Chapter 55.

Permits are required for new construction, additions, alterations and land disturbances.

Lakes and streams are an important part of our past, our present and our future. All navigable waters of the State of Wisconsin belong to the public and are protected so that all people, for all generations, can use and enjoy them.

The Chippewa County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance applies to all areas of Chippewa County that are within 1000' of any lake, pond, or flowage, or within 300' of any river or stream. The intent of the shoreland ordinance is to protect water quality, wildlife habitat, fish spawning grounds and to preserve the natural beauty of our lake and river ecosystems. The greatest challenge of the ordinance is to balance the "public trust" (that is required to protect that which belongs to everyone) and the "rights" of property owners (to be able to use their land in a responsible way). The land and water will still be here even after we have moved on. Many activities that occur around lakes and streams can be detrimental to the waterway. Because of this, permits are required for most activities and specific requirements are set forth, including:

- **Setbacks:** Certain setbacks must be met from roads, waterways, lot lines, floodplains, wells and septic systems in order to protect health, safety and water quality. All structures have required setbacks including those that are permanent or moveable, and those with or without foundations.
- **Subdivisions:** Minimum lot sizes and surveys are required for newly created parcels, in order to provide for safe and orderly building placement and access. Land Division Ordinance, Chapter 38.
- **Sanitary Regulations:** Rules for proper wastewater disposal (septic systems) address proper siting, design, installation, inspection and maintenance of all septic systems in order to protect public and environmental health. Sanitation Ordinance, Chapter 62
- **Land Disturbing Activities:** Grading, filling, dredging, ditching and excavating are regulated in order to prevent erosion and destruction of fish and wildlife habitat. The regulations also protect neighboring properties.
- **Vegetation Removal:** Removal of existing trees and vegetation should always be kept to a minimum. No excavation or vegetation removal shall be done in the area within 35' of the shoreline. This area, known as the Vegetative Buffer Zone, offers an area for reducing and filtering runoff before the runoff reaches the water and also offers habitat for fish and wildlife. Only a 35' wide area may be cleared for access to the water within this area. Instead of clearing, consider limited trimming for a filtered view.
- **Nonconforming Structures:** Nonconforming structures are those structures that do not meet certain regulations, but were built prior to the ordinance provisions being adopted. There are more restrictive limitations on the expansion and improvements of nonconforming structures in order to reduce the impact that these structures have on water quality or public health and safety factors.
- **Stairways and Walkways:** A single stairway and walkway may be permitted in areas less than 75' from the shoreline in order to provide safe access and to protect the shoreline because of steep slopes or wet, unstable soils.
- **Development in Wetlands:** Development in wetlands is strictly limited in order to protect water quality, flood storage areas, stormwater filtering areas and fish and wildlife areas.

The Chippewa County Department of Planning and Zoning can be contacted at (715) 726-7940 with any questions/concerns regarding the above listed activities. Also please feel free to contact the Department as a resource for such things as erosion control techniques, buffer zone restoration, impervious surface mitigation, or any general shoreland questions.