

# Working Around Water: **ONTARIO**

Shoreline development has a direct impact on the health of the Ottawa River. You can help reduce the impact by following regulations and best practices on your shoreline.



Photo: Meredith Brown

*Poor shoreline development increases surface runoff and pollution along the Ottawa River.*

As much as 90% of life in a river is born, raised, or fed within its shallow boundaries. Shorelines are unique ecosystems that foster hundreds of species and serve as vital connections between land and water. However ongoing shoreline development along the Ottawa River threatens these fragile ecosystems and significantly lowers water quality for fishing and swimming.

We all want that nice spot by the water to relax, enjoy time with family, or simply take in nature. But we often forget that activities such as clearing natural vegetation, removing rocks, and planting lawns to the water's edge all have direct impacts on the health of our river. Because of the importance of river health, shoreline development is regulated mainly through the Ministry of Natural Resources, conservation authorities, municipalities, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

**You can help** by following regulations and best practices to ensure that the building of any dock, boathouse, retaining wall, or other structure doesn't jeopardize wildlife and the quality of our water. Research even shows that natural shorelines increase property value. With careful development, future generations can continue to drink, fish and swim in our river.

## Did you know?

Shoreline regulations differ if you live on the Ontario side and the Quebec side of the Ottawa River.

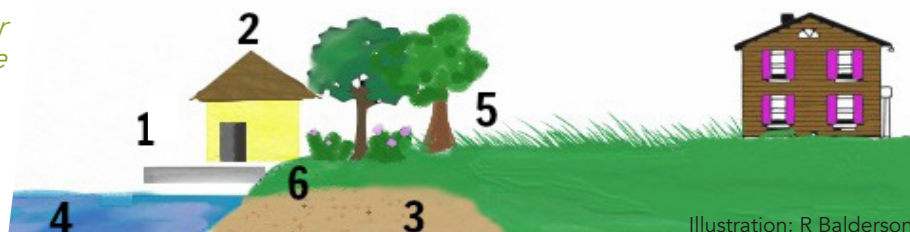
*Defending the Ottawa River, protecting our Communities.  
À la défense de la rivière des Outaouais. Pour la protection de nos communautés.*

Who do you need approval from?	CONTACT
<b>Conservation authorities</b> (CA) issue permits and approvals for most shoreline projects to prevent shoreline destruction. Altogether there are 36 CAs in Ontario, 3 located along the Ottawa River. Visit Conservation Ontario for more information and find your local CA. If there is no CA in your area, you could still need a permit from your municipality or MNR.	info@conservationontario.ca www.conservation-ontario.on.ca
<b>The Ministry of Natural Resources</b> (MNR) issues work permits for most in-water projects in Ontario through the <i>Public Lands Act</i> and the <i>Endangered Species Act</i> .	Kemptville: 613-258-8204 Kingston: 613-531-5700 www.mnr.gov.on.ca
<b>Fisheries and Oceans Canada</b> (DFO) works to protect fish habitat. Although they don't issue permits, they advise on best management practices to be followed by landowners and conservation authorities under the <i>Fisheries Act</i> .	1-855-852-8320 www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca
<b>Municipalities</b> issue building permits, which could be necessary for large-scale shoreline projects. Some municipalities also have additional bylaws to protect shorelines.	Contact your local municipality.

## Regulations for Common Shoreline Projects

- DOCKS:** A dock has the potential to disrupt the river bottom and destroy habitat. You will need approval from a CA and possibly MNR depending on size; docks that are least disruptive such as cantilevered docks and floating docks are most likely to be approved.
- BOATHOUSES:** You could require a building permit from your municipality, and approvals from MNR and your local CA. A poorly constructed boathouse threatens water quality and fish habitat so it is important to get necessary approvals.
- BEACHES:** Creating artificial beaches is forbidden on privately owned waterfronts as these often erode and disrupt natural habitat such as fish spawning beds.
- REMOVAL OF AQUATIC VEGETATION:** You will need a permit from the Ministry of Natural Resources. Weeds and aquatic vegetation provide vital habitat for fish so it is critical that we minimize their removal.
- REMOVAL OF SHORELINE VEGETATION:** There are currently no regulations to prevent this in Ontario; however we highly recommended that you leave natural vegetation on your shoreline to prevent erosion and reduce runoff into the river.
- STABILIZATION OF AN ERODING SHORELINE:** If your shoreline is eroding, consult your local CA to obtain a permit and receive advice on best practices. We recommend planting a buffer with native trees and shrubs as a long term solution instead of a concrete wall which can worsen erosion on your neighbour's property.

*Make sure you and your neighbours follow these regulations and best practices so that our river stays clean for drinking, fishing, and swimming.*



For information on shoreline regulations in Quebec, please see *Working Around Water: Quebec*