



Ottawa RIVERKEEPER®
SENTINELLE Outaouais

Working Around Water: **QUEBEC**

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 by M 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 through municipalities and the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment, Wildlife, and Parks.

You can help by following regulations and best practices to ensure that the building of any dock, water access, or other structure doesn't jeopardize wildlife and the quality of our water. With careful development, future generations will continue to drink, fish and swim in our river.

Did you know?

Quebec's shorelines are better protected than Ontario's thanks to stricter regulations.

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



Regulations for Common Shoreline Projects (2014)

These are the minimum regulations for common shoreline projects set out by the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment, Wildlife, and Parks that are enforced by all municipalities in Quebec. Following these regulations will help keep our river drinkable, swimmable, and fishable!

You are allowed to...

- ✓ **Stabilize an eroding shoreline by planting natural vegetation.**
Why? Roots formed by natural vegetation are more effective at preventing erosion than traditional retaining walls which can increase the erosion around the wall.
- ✓ **Create a gap up to 5 m wide in the vegetation to allow water access.**
Why? This way you can still access the water, but most natural vegetation is left alone for optimum shoreline health.
- ✓ **Build a floating, cantilever or pipe dock instead of a concrete dock.**
Why? These types of docks allow more light and movement of the water so that fish habitat stays intact.
- ✓ **Build a floating boathouse under 20 m²**
(Be careful, some municipalities forbid this)
Why? Larger boathouses obstruct sunlight from reaching the water.

You cannot...

- ✗ **Remove vegetation inside the 10m (sometimes 15 m) wide shore strip**
Why? This buffer is critical to provide habitat and filter pollution.
- ✗ **Plant a lawn to the water's edge.**
Why? Lawns don't have deep enough roots to withstand erosion.
- ✗ **Dig or fill in the shore strip or river bed.**
Why? This disrupts sensitive fish spawning grounds.
- ✗ **Add sand to create a beach.**
Why? Your shoreline will be slowly eaten away and sand can destroy sensitive aquatic habitats and spawning beds.
- ✗ **Create a boat launch for private use.**
Why? This becomes a channel for polluted runoff to travel into the river.
- ✗ **Remove aquatic vegetation or rocks.**
Why? Fish and other aquatic animals rely on these for spawning, food, and shelter.



Many of these shoreline properties are not following best practices. This adversely affects river health.

For any project on your shoreline, you will need a permit or certificate of authorization from your municipality. You will need to submit a complete project plan to your local inspector to make sure that your project won't cause erosion, pollution or habitat loss.

For more information on regulations, [contact](#) your local municipal authority or the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment, Wildlife, and Parks.

www.mddefp.gouv.qc.ca
t.1.800.561.1616

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

For more detailed information and resources please visit www.ottawariverkeeper.ca