

Ripple Effect #89

Preventing Shoreline Erosion

Planning any landscape changes to your favorite summer lake or river-edge spot here in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota or Manitoba? Concerned with keeping the shoreline where it belongs? Well, the Manitoba chapter of Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) has provided the following helpful suggestions to make sure that your “improvements” don’t end up eroding the shoreline:

- Maintain or enhance the vegetative zone. Allow natural vegetation to grow and plant more trees and shrubs with deep root systems along your shoreline. This will slow down nutrient rich runoff and help prevent shoreline and bank erosion. For steep slopes, re-establish groundcover, holding it in place with mulch and mesh or burlap.
- Don’t strip the entire immediate waterfront of its aquatic vegetation, which holds sediment in place. Instead, designate a small activity area for swimming or, even easier, put a ladder at the end of your dock.
- Hook a rain barrel up to your eave troughs. By catching rainfall before it hits the ground, you can greatly reduce runoff. Even temporarily storing rain in a barrel until after a storm helps reduce erosion.
- Leave large boulders along your shoreline to stabilize it (but don’t add weight to banks with weak soil, a characteristic of the Red River Basin). Don’t automatically drag away driftwood and fallen trees from the shoreline. They can act as a breakwater to prevent erosion, and they also protect aquatic life.
- Build steps or a ramp for access between the top and bottom of the bank.
- Opt for a low-impact dock (floating, pipe, or cantilever), ideally one that minimizes modifications to the shoreline.
- When constructing docks, minimize interference with the natural movement of water and sediment by supporting the structure with piles or floats (guides are available for showing you how to build erosion-preventing docks).

- Place only clean gravel – free from fine materials and organic matter – along the lakeshore.

Be sure to check with your state/provincial and local agencies responsible for shoreland regulations before altering your shoreline.

Until the next Ripple Effect,

The Red River Basin Commission (RRBC)

The RRBC is a grassroots organization that is a chartered not-for-profit corporation under the provisions of Manitoba, North Dakota, Minnesota, and South Dakota law. Our offices in Moorhead, MN and Winnipeg, MB can be reached at 218-291-0422 and 204-982-7254, or you can check out our website at www.redriverbasincommission.org.

