

Shoreline Alterations: Beach Blanket



Will a sand beach work on my shoreline?

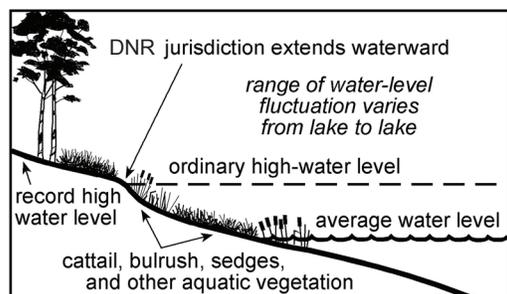
One goal of DNR Ecological and Waters Resources is to limit unnecessary and potentially damaging alterations to shorelines. Specifically, use of beach sand and other types of fill is limited in order to prevent damage to fish spawning areas, aquatic habitat, and water quality of Minnesota's lakes.

IS AN INDIVIDUAL PERMIT REQUIRED?

For most projects constructed *below* the ordinary high-water level* (OHWL) of public waters as determined by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), an individual permit is required from the DNR.

Beach blanket exception: An individual permit from the DNR is not required for beach sand or gravel placement if the conditions outlined in this information sheet are followed.

If you have questions concerning the contents of this information sheet, contact your local DNR Area Hydrologist. See contact information on reverse side.



Shoreline cross section

ARE OTHER PERMITS REQUIRED?

Other governmental units (federal, state, city, county, township, and watershed authority) may require a permit for that portion of the project within their jurisdiction, which usually involves work above the OHWL. It is advisable to contact them.

*For lakes and wetlands, the OHWL is the highest elevation that has been maintained as to leave evidence on the landscape. It is commonly that point where the natural vegetation changes from predominantly aquatic to predominantly terrestrial. For watercourses, the OHWL is the top of the bank of the channel. For reservoirs and flowages, the OHWL is the operating elevation of the normal summer pool.

Although natural sand beaches can be found on many Minnesota lakeshores, landowners often attempt to create them on shores where they do not naturally occur (i.e., a muddy-bottom lake). If you are considering adding a beach blanket, you should know a few important things before investing your money.

- Beach material that erodes into the lake may coat aquatic plant beds and fish spawning grounds, degrading fish and wildlife habitat and damaging the water quality of your lake.
- Beach material must be clean and washed free of fine particles and must be of the appropriate grain size (coarse sand or larger) to stay in place under wave action. Placed material that migrates from your site may constitute a violation of water quality standards. To further minimize the risk of your beach migrating away from the site, maintain aquatic vegetation on both sides of your beach, like in the diagram on page two.
- The lakebed must be capable of holding beach material in place. If the lake bottom is soft, the sand or gravel will only sink into the muck and disappear.
- You are only allowed to install sand or gravel twice in the same location without a permit.
- Vegetation will constantly emerge through the beach material, and additional plant control will be needed on the beach. If you plan to weed by hand or apply herbicide, an aquatic plant management permit may be required from the DNR Division of Fisheries.
- Beach blankets may not be placed over emergent vegetation such as bulrush or cattails unless you obtain a permit from the Division of Fisheries.

Keep in mind that you are *not* allowed to install any plant barrier or liner (e.g., filter fabric or plastic) underneath your constructed beach. If owning lakeshore property with a sandy beach is a high priority for you, look for lakeshore property where sandy beaches occur naturally before you make that important purchase.



Beach blanket at shoreline.

Shoreline Alterations: Beach Blanket

If you have considered all of the conditions above and you think adding beach sand or gravel will work for your shoreline, you may install a beach blanket without an individual permit if the installation meets all of the following conditions:

- The sand or gravel layer may be up to 6 inches thick; up to 50 feet wide along the shoreline or one-half the width of the lot, whichever is less; and up to 10 feet waterward of the ordinary high-water level (OHWL; see sidebar on page 1).
- The beach blanket does not cover emergent aquatic vegetation, unless authorized by an aquatic plant management permit (contact your local DNR Fisheries office).
- The sand or gravel is clean and washed so that it is free of fine particles.
- Local watershed district and local zoning officials are given at least 7 days' notice by the landowner.
- No plant barrier or liner (i.e., filter fabric or plastic) is installed underneath your beach sand.

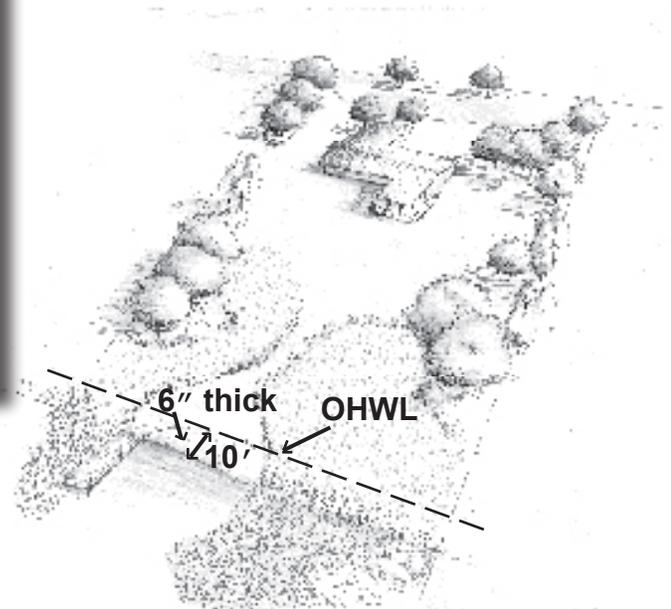
Installation of sand and gravel may be repeated *once* at the same location but may not exceed the amount of sand and dimensions of the original sand blanket.

©2012 State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources. Prepared by DNR Ecological and Water Resources. Based on Minnesota Statutes 103G, Public Waters Work Permit Program Rules Chapter 6115.



Another example of a beach blanket is pictured above.

The plan view of a diagram (right) shows dimensions of a beach blanket surrounded by vegetation with a path to the sand area.



Based on an illustration by Roxanna Esparza.

DNR Contact Information



DNR Ecological and Water Resources
website and a listing of Area Hydrologists:
<http://mndnr.gov/contact/ewr.html>

DNR Ecological and Water Resources
500 Lafayette Road, Box 32
St. Paul, MN 55155
(651) 259-5100

For information about aquatic plant management permits:
<http://mndnr.gov/shorelandmgmt/apg/regulations.html>

DNR Information Center

Twin Cities: (651) 296-6157
Minnesota toll free: 1-888-646-6367
Telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD): (651) 296-5484
TDD toll free: 1-800-657-3929

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is available regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, age, or disability. Discrimination inquiries should be sent to Minnesota DNR, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4049; or the Equal Opportunity Office, Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240.

© 2012 State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources

This information is available in an alternative format on request.