

# GUIDELINES FOR SHORE WORKS IN THE RIDEAU VALLEY WATERSHED

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These general guidelines apply to any new water access, construction, repair, modifications or replacements along shorelines within the Rideau Valley Watershed except on the Rideau Canal (*Rideau Canal is administered by Parks Canada-Rideau Canal Office, including the Rideau River, Lower, Big and Upper Rideau Lakes, Adams Lake and the Tay Canal below Perth*).

Docks and shoreworks which alter the shoreline will require approval from the Conservation Authority under Ontario Regulation 174/06 “*Development, Interference with Wetlands, Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation*” made pursuant to the *Conservation Authorities Act*, 1990 as amended.

**Rideau Valley Conservation Authority** 3889 Rideau Valley Drive, Box  
599 Manotick, Ontario K4M 1A5  
**613-692-3571 | 3504-267-800-1 | Fax: 613-692-0831** [www.rvca.ca](http://www.rvca.ca) | [info@rvconline.com](mailto:info@rvconline.com)

## The information needed to address your inquiry:

- Lot & concession of property, waterbody, municipality, ward and civic address; ○ A brief description of the proposed project indicating style of dock (cantilever, post, floating, or other structures), dimensions and materials;
- Proposed start and finish dates; ○ An accurate sketch of your property and nature of the shoreline: location & description of proposed and existing structures in relation to the water (a copy of your survey often works well); and
- Photographs of the waterfront/shoreline (very useful if available).

## Why These Activities Require Review

Owning a waterfront property is a privilege and a responsibility. Shorelines are the ‘ribbon of life’, being nursery or habitat to more than 90% of the life in or along the waterfront. Docks and shoreline works can intrude into this fragile area and cause damage. Careful consideration of waterfront projects will help to protect our water for the present and future use and enjoyment of all inhabitants.

## Role of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority

We review and advise on shoreline and dock work considering:

- Flood protection and erosion/sediment control;
- Aquatic habitat and pollution;
- Wetland protection

## Guidelines for Dock Construction

### Size:

Generally, if the total surface area of the dock is less than 24 square metres (256 square feet) with a modest access ramp and/or stairs, a simple approval is likely. If the proposed dock is larger, or if the proposal involves a boathouse, boat lift, ramp, boat launch and/or site alteration, additional review and approvals from the Conservation Authority and other agencies may be required (additional fees apply).

### Dock Design:

Docks have the potential to disrupt currents, disturb the lake or river bottom and/or destroy habitat.

- Recommended dock designs are those styles that are the least disruptive to the environment. In order of preference these include:
  - cantilevered, floating, or docks supported on posts or pipes;
  - Crib style docks are evaluated individually and may not be approvable;
  - Docks consisting of a solid in-water structure, such as concrete, will not likely be approved.
- Consider *size* and *design* in terms of stability and safety. A dock as narrow as 1 metre (3 feet) may be adequate for recreational use. 'T' and 'L' shaped docks add stability.
- Maximum length out into the water may be restricted (depending on water depths, channel configuration or frontage width, etc.).
- Recommended *materials* include non-treated lumber; particularly cedar and hemlock due to their moisture resistant qualities, metal, plastic or composite materials are also acceptable.
- The use of vertical skirting extending into the water should be avoided as it restricts water movement and can be more susceptible to ice damage.

### Timing of Work:

- **No 'in-water' work** may take place during the following fish spawning/nursery periods (contact MNR to verify which period applies to your water body):
  - March 15th to June 30th for warm water fish communities;
  - October 1st to June 30th for mixed fish communities; and
  - October 1st to May 31st for cold water fish communities.

The annual reinstallation of floating docks is permitted during the 'no in-water work timing window' provided they can be installed without causing disturbance to fish spawning activity or habitat. **No other in-water work or disturbance of the bed is allowed during this time period.**

### Location:

- To conserve natural shorelines, disturbance related to water access or use must not result in a cumulative disturbance of more than 25% of the width (water frontage) of the property to a maximum of 15 metres (50 feet) whichever is less. The balance of the lot frontage should be left undisturbed. Some municipalities and/or Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) or Parks Canada have additional restrictions.
- Works should be located outside of wetland areas and away from known or potential fish spawning areas.
- It is a general guideline that each lot has only one water access structure.
- To minimize potential impacts or conflicts with neighbouring properties and navigation, water access structures should be located a minimum of 4.5 metres (15 feet) away from side lot lines; extend this imaginary line out into the water to account for water traffic, access & egress and navigation safety.
- Additional restrictions may apply to narrow channels.

### **Construction:**

- Avoid the removal of shoreline trees and shrubs or modification to the shore.
- During all phases of construction, no building materials or harmful substances should enter the water; the use of straw bales, erosion barriers or silt curtains may be necessary while you are constructing your project to protect the marine environment from sediment.

### **Repair/Replacement:**

- If you are repairing or replacing a water access structure that does not meet the guidelines mentioned above, a review may be required by our office.

### **Guidelines for Shoreline Protection Works**

Shoreline erosion is a natural process; however a stable shoreline can protect your property and the water's health along *your* frontage. If you feel that active erosion is occurring, here are some guidelines **(note: a permit from the RVCA will be required for this type of work):**

- ***Traditional vertical walls and gabions (rock filled wire cage) are no longer approved methods of erosion control;*** they require maintenance, may not be durable, nor favourable for fish and wildlife habitat.
- The construction of a low angled slope (less than 1:3 rise to run ratio), working back or upland from the edge of the water will provide stability and reduce the energy of wave action. Geotextile filter cloth should be underlain to hold the bare soil in place. Rip-Rap (clean, loose angular blasted rock, free of 'fines') should cover the filter cloth, holding it down and dissipating forces of the wave, wind, and gravity.
- Native trees, shrubs, and ground cover should be planted immediately upland of the shore works to help stabilize the shoreline through root development. This type of shoreline is attractive and beneficial to the natural environment.

### **Beach Creation**

Due to their negative environmental impacts and maintenance concerns, beach creation and vertical walls at the water's edge are generally not supported on privately or individually owned waterfronts.

### **Other permits & Additional contacts:**

#### **Local Municipality**

Some municipalities have by-laws that may apply to water access construction/shore works. Development agreements may also be in place restricting waterfront disturbance.

#### **Parks Canada: Rideau Canal Office (Smith Falls)**

If your property is located on the Rideau Canal, written approval from their office is required for works on/over/adjacent to the Canal. Offices are located in Smith Falls.

[www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/on/rideau/visit/riversains-shoreline.aspx](http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/on/rideau/visit/riversains-shoreline.aspx)

613-283-7199 (ask for 'Shoreline Permitting')

## **Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR)**

If your property is located on a lake or river in the Rideau watershed other than the Rideau Canal, a written approval/work permit may be required. Contact:

[www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/crown-land-work-permits](http://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/crown-land-work-permits)

**Kingston District:** 613-531-5700

**Kemptville District:** 613-258-8204

**Transport Canada: Navigation Protection Program – Marine Safety** If the dock has the potential of interfering with navigation, approval from Transport Canada may be required.

[www.tc.gc.ca/eng/programs-621.html](http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/programs-621.html)

**National Capital Region:** 613-949-4316 | [npphq-ppnac@tc.gc.ca](mailto:npphq-ppnac@tc.gc.ca)

**Outside of NCR:** 1-519-383-1989 | [nppont-ppnont@tc.gc.ca](mailto:nppont-ppnont@tc.gc.ca)

## **Fisheries and Oceans Canada: Fisheries Protection Program**

If the work is being conducted in/near waterbodies supporting fish & fish habitat or could cause serious harm to fish, it may require authorization from Fisheries and Oceans Canada. [www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pnw-ppe/index-eng.html](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pnw-ppe/index-eng.html)

1-855-852-8320 | [FisheriesProtection@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:FisheriesProtection@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

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All other approvals as might be required from the Municipality, and/or other Provincial or Federal Agencies must be obtained prior to initiation of work. This includes but is not limited to the Endangered Species Act, the Ontario Water Resources Act, Environmental Protection Act, Public Lands Act, and the Canada Fisheries Act.