

Your Role as a waterfront property owner

- Know the local rules and regulations regarding shoreline development and site disturbance activities.
- Maintain existing shoreline areas with native vegetation.
- Avoid disturbance of the shoreline no disturbance area.
- Do not plant non-native vegetation that requires watering or fertilizing.
- Do not fertilize within the shoreline area.
- Take positive action and secure the required permits before erosion occurs in upland areas as a result of development activities.
- Remember, one person really can make a difference.

The cumulative effects of good stewardship will help protect water quality for future generations to come.

What the Law Says:

Site Disturbance Ord. No. 374

Waterfront Lots: Lots with frontage on recognized lakes or the Coeur d'Alene or Spokane Rivers are required to maintain an undisturbed natural vegetation buffer along the waterfront. The buffer shall be a minimum of 25 feet in slope distance from the high water mark of the water body.

What does this mean?

The waterfront "No Disturbance Area" must remain in a natural state without human disturbance. No excavation, no cutting of trees, grass or shrubs, no placement of structures or retaining walls, no fill or placement of sand is allowed within 25 feet of the ordinary high water mark.

However, limited development for shoreline access may be allowed provided proper approval is received from the Building and Planning Department.

WHY IS THIS RULE IN PLACE?

The No Disturbance Buffer was created to protect our natural resources. Maintaining established vegetation reduces the potential for nutrients entering the waterways, which protects water quality. The buffer also protects fish and wildlife habitat as well as provides an aesthetically pleasing viewshed.

WHY IS THE SETBACK 25 FEET?

Over the years, this has been an issue of some debate. Although some may say the setback should be smaller, research indicates that a 25' setback is one of the smaller setbacks found along other major lakes in the U.S, some of which are as far back as 100'. A local example would be Bonner County's Lake Pend Orielle, which is 40 feet. In part, the Kootenai County 25 foot setback was selected in 1997 in an effort to balance property rights and the need to protect natural resources. Moreover, 25' was found to be generally consistent with other Zoning regulation setbacks.

WATER QUALITY

When large amounts of nutrients are suddenly added to water bodies, water quality generally changes for the worse. Oftentimes these lake aging changes are referred to as "eutrophication", which may include: 1) More aquatic plants and algae growth; 2) A decrease in water clarity; 3) Oxygen (crucial for all aquatic life) in the deepest waters may be depleted; and 4) Bottom sediments may become more mucky and the food chain becomes less stable.

Phosphorus is the nutrient most responsible for the pollution and premature aging of lakes. For this reason, fertilizing along shoreline areas should be avoided.

WHY CAN'T I HAVE SAND IN THE 25 FOOT SETBACK?

Sand deposited along the shoreline results in sand being drawn into the lakebed, which facilitates the growth of weeds that can root on the lake bottom. In addition, fish habitat is changed, spawning areas can be negatively altered and aquatic bottom life threatened.

Lakefront Clean-up

Due to the recent high water event and the resulting debris left along many county shorelines, you may be thinking of cleaning-up your waterfront. Please remember the No Disturbance Zone. "Debris" left from the recent high-water event may be removed by hand. Unfortunately, sand or landscaping that washed away cannot be replaced. If you have questions, please contact the Building and Planning Department at (208) 446-1070.

On an individual basis, little "clean-up" projects along the shoreline may not seem like much. However, when the number of lakefront residences are multiplied by the number of "small" projects, the effects can be significant. Cumulatively, these types "small" projects have historically resulted in the loss of the natural shoreline.

"If time and geology didn't create a sandy beach naturally, it's unlikely an artificial sand beach will remain where you put it. Don't waste your money on replacing lost sand year after year -use the public beach."

- Haekel 1996- Professional Biologist

WHAT DO I DO IF I SEE A VIOLATION?

If you see a violation: 1) if possible, take photos; 2) write down a location or address; 3) provide a detailed description of the violation; and 4) Submit a Complaint Form, which can be printed from the Building and Planning Department web site. If you have any questions, please call "Code Enforcement" at (208) 446-1070.

Thank you for
Protecting Our Lakes
and Rivers

Worried about Wildfire?

For helpful information, please check out FireSmart™ at the Protecting the Idaho Panhandle website:

www.plrcd.org/NOFIRE/

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Additional information can be found at the following agencies or by contacting our department:

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

2110 Ironwood Pkwy.
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
(208) 769-1422

Panhandle Health Department

8500 N. Atlas Rd.
Hayden, ID 83835
(208) 415-5200

Idaho Department of Fish and Game Panhandle Region

2885 W. Kathleen Ave.
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815
(208) 769-1414

Army Corps of Engineers

3815 Schriber Way
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
(208) 765-7237

Idaho Department of Lands

3780 Industrial Ave.
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
(208) 769-1525

More information can be found on our website, including lists of approved native vegetation that can be planted within the 25' No Disturbance Zone.

<http://www.kcgov.us/departments/planning/>

Kootenai County
Building and Planning Department
451 Government Way
P.O. Box 9000
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816-9000

Waterfront Buffers



"The 25' No Disturbance Zone"

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Lakefront Clean-up

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