



# Shoreline Do's & Don'ts

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This activity center is part of the **Water Protection** theme.

## What's the purpose of this activity?

To initiate discussion on ways that we can live near water while promoting good water quality and wildlife habitat.

## Key messages:

- The riparian zone, also termed "the ribbon of life", is an area where water meets land, a transition zone between aquatic and terrestrial environments
- Riparian areas, "the ribbon of life", are very important as they protect water quality and wildlife habitats
- Humans can impact the water's edge and in turn this has an effect on the water system

## Materials

- Model
- Waterfront Living Poster

## What will I be doing?

- Your role is to act as a facilitator to engage students in discussion.
- Using the model and the poster, "Waterfront Living", have students compare the two sides and identify the differences.
- With each comparison, discuss how and why it would be beneficial in:

### 1. Maintaining a natural shoreline

- provides protection from erosion caused by wave action
- provides wildlife habitat
- riparian vegetation aids in decreasing sedimentation, that is, it catches debris coming into the water from run off
- riparian vegetation helps filter the water as it comes into the water system through the removal of contamination

### 2. Floating Dock

- a floating dock vs. a solid dock has a much lower impact on the "ribbon of life"
- solid docks destroy wildlife habitat, alters current and increase erosion in other places

### 3. Boats

- Good maintenance of your motor will decrease the spills into the water
- Choose a 4-stroke outboard as it is more efficient and less spillage
- Use an electric motor if possible, no spillage and it is much quieter
- When near shore, slow down and be aware that the wake produced by the boat erodes the shoreline

### 4. If can, choose to place buildings away from the shoreline.

- Shoreline structures decrease the riparian areas ability to filter and therefore can degrade water quality
- Shoreline structures decrease wildlife access to land

## 5. Upgrade septic systems

- Faulty septic systems contaminate the water!
- Ensure that the septic system for the household is up to date and the proper distance from the shoreline
- Upgraded/Up-to-date septic systems reduce the chance of seepage and run off that can contaminate the water
- Also, keep in mind that what you put down the drain or toilet ends up in the septic system and if it is leaking, in the water!

## 6. Be thoughtful of Chemical and Fertilizer Use

- Chemicals and fertilizers used on your property by the water may end up in the water system
- Fertilizers contain phosphates which are already naturally occurring in the water but if increased can increase plant growth and change the nature of the water body/system
- Fertilizers and chemicals that run into the water can damage water quality

## 7. Natural Landscaping around your property

- Vegetation and the use of gravel instead of pavement helps filter and slow runoff, thereby protecting water quality
- An added benefit is that trees can provide shade and shelter from wind which can decrease the need to use energy running air conditioning in the summer and allowing you to lower the thermostat in the winter

## 8. Native Plants suitable for area!

- Native plants require less maintenance and no chemicals/fertilizers therefore decrease the chance of water contamination
- Shrub and tree species improve wildlife habitat by maintaining water temperature and food sources for species such as fish

## Additional Background Information:

Healthy shorelines help keep our water healthy, for humans and wildlife.

Review accompanying Shoreline Primer for some background to add to discussions with children

## Clean Up Procedures:

Make sure all items for the presentation are organized for the next day. Leave the site as you found it for the next

