

Washburn County Shoreland Ordinance -effective October 1, 2016

“What Can I Do”

As mandated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Washburn County has adopted a new shoreland ordinance, which reflects the minimum standards of Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 115. Counties are not permitted to exceed the minimum standards. The following information provides a very brief overview* of the new ordinance from the perspective that most of you care about; “what can I do”. The information is presented referencing the seven standards that NR 115 is designed to address.

1. **Lot Size-** The minimum size for any riparian (waterfront) parcel is 100’ of average width and 20,000 square feet of area. Average width is determined from measurements at the OHWM, the setback line and the rear property line. Parcels zoned for larger lot dimensions must meet those criteria. Nonconforming/substandard lots may be used under certain circumstances.
2. **Setbacks-** The setback for all waterways is 75’ from the OHWM. Some structures are exempt from any setback. They are; boathouses, stairs/walkways, utility lines/equipment, satellite receivers and devices used to treat runoff. Gazebos and other open-sides structures are exempt from the 75’ setback but must be behind 35’. There are still wetland setbacks of 25’. Keep in mind that structures are now more than just buildings. The new definition of “structure” includes patios, decks, cement slabs, fire-pits, retaining walls and more.
3. **Vegetation-** This refers to the shoreland buffer, which is the strip of vegetation that runs (or used to run) along your shoreline. Do not disturb it back to 35’ from the water. You may open up a viewing corridor that is 35’ wide for every 100’ of your total shoreline.
4. **Filling and Grading-** No filling or grading is allowed in the buffer. Beyond that, some filling is allowed with a permit.
5. **Impervious Surfaces-** These are now regulated. One may develop to the point that 15% of their lot is covered by impervious surfaces. This percentage may be increased under certain conditions. The percentage is calculated by dividing the total square footage of all impervious surfaces within 300’ of the OHWM by the square footage of the entire lot.
6. **Height-** No structure within 75’ of the OHWM may be higher than 75’.
7. **Nonconforming Structures-** Structures less than 35’ from the OHWM- You may repair, maintain, expand vertically or replace in exact same footprint. Structures at 35’ but less than 75’ from the OHWM- You may repair, maintain and expand vertically. Principal structures may add a one-time 200 square foot addition within the setback or expand beyond the setback. Principal structures may be relocated on the property under some conditions.

****Again, this is an extremely brief overview of activities that are allowed. You should contact the zoning office with specific questions at 715-468-4690.***