

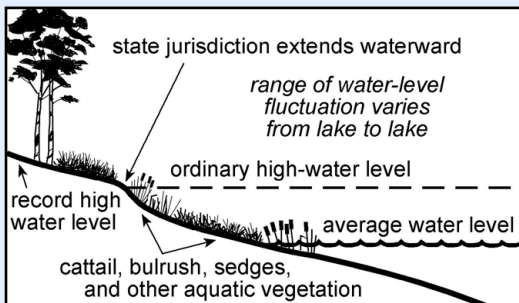
Shoreline Alterations: Beach Sand Blanket



IS AN INDIVIDUAL PERMIT REQUIRED?

For most projects constructed *below* the ordinary high-water level* (OHWL) of public waters, an individual Public Waters Work Permit is required by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

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



Shoreline cross section.

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

Please note that local units of government and other agencies may require a permit for this project.

*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.

Will a sand beach work on my shoreline?

One goal of DNR Waters 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.

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 beach sand, you should know a few important things before investing your money.

- Wave action, no matter how minimal, will erode your beach and the sand will migrate down shore.
- You are only allowed to install sand or gravel twice in the same location; after that, an individual permit is needed.
- The beach sand 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.
- Vegetation will constantly emerge through the sand, 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.
- Sand blankets may not be placed over emergent vegetation such as bulrush or cattails unless you obtain a permit from the Division of Fisheries.
- If the lake bottom is soft, the sand will only sink into the muck and disappear.

Keep in mind that you are *not* allowed to install any plant barrier or liner (e.g., filter fabric or plastic) underneath your beach sand. 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.



Sand blanket at shoreline.

Shoreline Alterations: Beach Sand Blanket

If you have considered all of the conditions above and you think adding beach sand will work for your shoreline, you may install a beach sand 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 does not extend more than 10 feet waterward of the ordinary high-water level (OHWL; see sidebar on page 1).
- The beach sand blanket does not cover emergent aquatic vegetation, unless authorized by an aquatic plant management permit (contact your local DNR Fisheries office).
- 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.

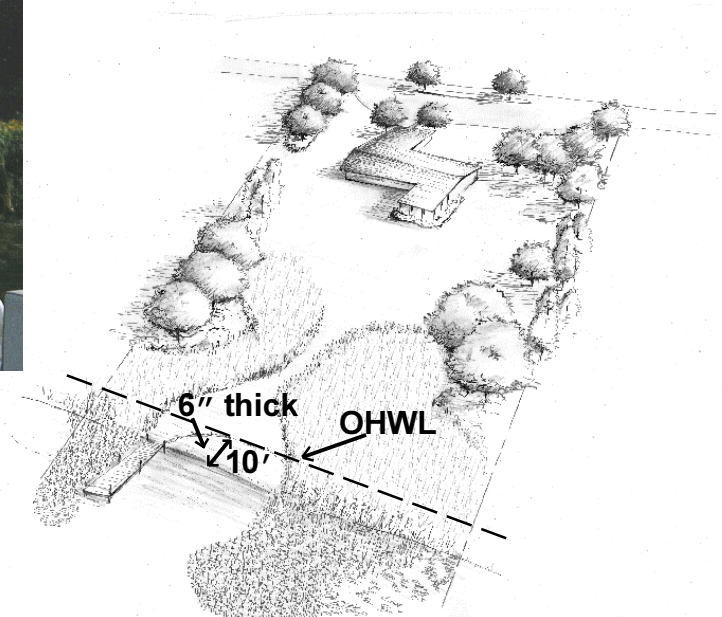
Installation of sand and gravel may be repeated *once* at the same location but may not exceed the amount of sand and dimensions of the original sand blanket.

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Another example of a beach sand blanket is pictured above.

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



Based on an illustration by Roxanna Esparza.

DNR Contact Information

DNR Waters website lists Area Hydrologists: www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters
DNR Waters in St. Paul: 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4032, (651) 296-4800



DNR Ecological Services website provides information about aquatic plant management permits: www.dnr.state.mn.us/ecological_services
DNR Ecological Services in St. Paul: 500 Lafayette Road, Box 25, St. Paul, MN 55155, (651) 296-2835

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

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