



PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT

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FACT SHEET

SHORELAND, WETLAND, AND HABITAT PROTECTION ORDINANCE MAJOR REVISIONS 2011

View the entire Ordinance at: <http://www.co.adams.wi.gov/Departments/PlanningandZoning/tabid/81/Default.aspx>

Highlights of the Ordinance revisions can be found below; details are found in the Ordinance

Buffer Zone

MAINTENANCE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A VEGETATIVE BUFFER ZONE

The waters of Adams County are one of our greatest resources. To protect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and natural scenic beauty, and to promote preservation and restoration of native vegetation, this ordinance designates land that extends from the ordinary high water mark to a minimum of thirty-five (35) feet inland as a vegetative buffer zone and prohibits the removal of vegetation in the vegetative buffer zone except as follows:

1. A Vegetated Buffer Zone is an area (35 feet deep) along the shore of whatever body of water is found on the property. This body of water may be a lake, stream, or river. This area must have vegetation in the form of grasses, flowers, trees and/or shrubs. This vegetation can be native or non-native or a combination of both.
2. A landowner may create/maintain view/access corridor(s) to the water for personal use. Trees and shrubs may be removed in the vegetative buffer zone to create access and viewing corridors, but this view access corridor(s) is limited to a total of 30% of the shoreline frontage. For example, on a property with 100 ft of frontage, a landowner may have one view/access corridor of 30 feet or they may have multiple corridors, but the total may not exceed 30% of the shoreline frontage or 30 ft in this case. There is no requirement to utilize the full 30% allowable for view/access corridors. Within the view/access corridor, a sand recreational area may be maintained with hand tools. All access to water, including piers, docks, and/or stairs must be placed in the access and viewing corridor(s). All storage of any material or equipment must also be confined to the access and viewing corridor(s).
3. The portion of the buffer zone that is not considered view/access corridor (not less than seventy percent (70%) of the length of this buffer zone) shall have vegetation preserved. The landowner will create a maintenance agreement for the entire buffer zone which shall be approved by the County and on file at the County and shall describe existing vegetation and/or vegetation restored and what maintenance activities shall occur in the vegetative buffer zone. Assistance may be obtained from the Planning and Zoning Department to develop your buffer plan and maintenance agreement. The vegetated portion of the buffer zone must have a canopy cover of 50% or more native plants upon maturity. Native plants are those species which existed here prior to European settlement. Canopy is defined as the area covered by leafy branches or plants. As an example, a single oak tree (native) may be expected, when mature, to cover an area 30+ feet in diameter while a purple coneflower (also native) might cover an area of 3 feet in diameter when mature.
4. By July 1, 2015, all lands that extend from the ordinary high water mark to a minimum of thirty-five (35) feet inland that currently do not meet the above requirements, shall become vegetative buffer zones or be considered in violation of this ordinance. Exception to this requirement are lands that extend from the ordinary high water mark to a minimum of thirty-five (35) feet inland that had no existing vegetation prior to the Adams County Shoreland Protection Ordinance effective date of 1/1/1971.

See Section 4 of the Ordinance for further buffer vegetation maintenance & management detail.

Impervious Surface Standard

CONSTRUCTION WITHIN 300' OF ANY SHORELINE

Along with your Permit Application and the normal construction plans, you must submit a detailed and accurate site plan showing all setback measurements, description and dimensions of all existing and proposed impervious surfaces and the impervious surface calculations for that part of your lot that is within 300' of the water. Your proposed construction project will likely be an impervious surface, unless specifically designed, constructed and maintained to be pervious. Impervious surfaces include but are not limited to: buildings, driveways, decks, patios, gazebos, pavilions, and sidewalks – basically any ground coverage that is not specifically designed and maintained to allow infiltration of rainfall. **The site plan as submitted to Planning and Zoning must be signed by the property owner.**

CALCULATION OF IMPERVIOUS SURFACE

Percentage of impervious surface shall be calculated by dividing the surface area of existing and proposed impervious surfaces on the portion of a lot or parcel that is within three hundred (300) feet of the ordinary high-water mark by the total surface area of that portion of the lot or parcel that is within three hundred (300) feet of the ordinary high-water mark, and multiplied by one hundred (100).

IMPERVIOUS SURFACE STANDARD

Up to fifteen percent (15%) impervious surface on the portion of a lot or parcel that is within three hundred (300) feet of the ordinary high-water mark is allowed without mitigation plans. All applicable permits must still be obtained.

MAXIMUM IMPERVIOUS SURFACE

More than fifteen percent (15%) impervious surface but less than thirty percent (30%) impervious surface on the portion of a lot or parcel that is within three hundred (300) feet of the ordinary high-water mark is allowed provided a permit is issued for ALL development that exceeds fifteen percent (15%) impervious surface but not more than thirty percent (30%) impervious surfaces AND a mitigation plan meeting the standards. Mitigation plans must be agreed upon and recorded with Adams County Planning and Zoning Department and the office of the Register of Deeds.

EXISTING IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

For existing impervious surfaces that do not comply with the impervious surface standard or the maximum impervious surface standard, the property owner may:

1. Maintain and repair the existing impervious surfaces;
2. Replace existing impervious surfaces with similar surfaces within the existing building or structure envelope;
3. Relocate or modify an existing impervious surface with similar or different impervious surface, provided that the relocation or modification does not result in an increase in the percentage of impervious surface that existed on the effective date of this ordinance revision, and the impervious surface meets the applicable setback requirements and the applicable zoning district requirements.
4. This does not supersede other provisions in the ordinance. Maintenance, reconstruction, relocation and expansion of existing structures must comply with other applicable provisions in this ordinance, the shoreland setback standards, and nonconforming structure provisions.