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Frequently Asked Questions

Lake Huron & Georgian Bay Shoreline: Nearshore Permit Process

This document is intended to provide some basic answers to frequently asked questions regarding the GSCA nearshore permit process. This information is general in nature and may differ slightly based on the unique characteristics of each property. If you are considering works along the shoreline we always recommend that you contact our office regarding the specifics of your property and proposed works. More information, including a presentation on shoreline works, a permit application guide and supporting policy documents can be found on our website at <https://www.greysauble.on.ca/planning-regulations/>.

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Q: Do I need a permit for shoreline works?

A: At the shoreline it is likely that you will require a permit from GSCA to undertake development or site alteration. To find out if your property is in a regulated area and if a permit is required, please contact GSCA directly via telephone or email to inquire. You can also check our online [Regulations Mapping](#) to determine if your project is located in a regulated area.

Q: What do the terms “development” and “alteration” include?

A: GSCA has interest in “development”, “alteration”, and/or interference within Regulated Areas. Development is defined as any construction, reconstruction, or placement of a structure; any



Watershed Municipalities
Arran-Elderslie, Chatsworth, Georgian Bluffs, Grey Highlands
Meaford, Owen Sound, South Bruce Peninsula, Blue Mountains

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change to a building or structure that would alter its use or number of dwelling units; any site grading; or the temporary or permanent placement or removal of fill material. Alteration is considered the straightening, diverting or interfering in any way with the existing channel of a watercourse, or interfering in any way with a wetland. If you are unsure how this may apply to your project, please contact our office.

Q: How is the Regulated Area determined on the shoreline?

A: The regulated area encompasses a 15-metre setback for wave uprush and other water-related hazards from the 100-Year Flood Lake Level, plus an additional 15-metre regulated allowance. Other Water-Related Hazards means water-associated phenomena other than flooding hazards and wave uprush which act on shorelines. This includes, but is not limited to ship-generated waves, ice piling and ice jamming. Where a sloped shoreline (cliff, bluff, or bank) or a dynamic beach is present, the regulated allowance may extend further inland to account for the potential increase in hazards associated with these features. Further information regarding these setbacks can be found in the [administrative policy document](#) available on our website.

Q: What is the 100-Year Lake Flood Level?

A: The 100-Year Lake Flood Level is an elevation that was determined through a study that was completed by the Province in 1988 in response to the highwater levels observed in 1986. As per the Provincial Policy Statement 2020([PPS](#)), this is defined as the peak instantaneous stillwater level, resulting from combinations of mean monthly lake levels and wind setups, which has a 1% chance of being equalled or exceeded in any given year.

Q: Who should I contact for shoreline works?

A: For shoreline works you should start by contacting GSCA and you may need to contact other agencies including Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), the local municipality, the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), Transport Canada, and local indigenous communities.

Q: What if I'm not working in the water?

A: Even if works are occurring outside of the water, GSCA's regulated area includes lands that are close or adjacent to the shoreline that could be affected by hazards such as flooding, erosion and dynamic beaches. Property owners should contact GSCA prior to undertaking any development or site alterations.

Q: Do I need engineered drawings?

A: If you are repairing or replacing existing shoreline protection works, engineering is typically not a requirement (but it would be highly recommended). If you are proposing new erosion protection, a complete permit application may require the support of a qualified coastal engineer.

Q: What if my dwelling is at immediate risk?

A: If works are required immediately to protect a privately-owned dwelling from wave uprush and other water related hazards due to a flood and erosion emergency consultation is needed with GSCA prior to the work being completed. A permit is not required to place sandbags in an emergency.

Q: Do I need a permit for landscaping?

A: If your landscaping plans are not changing the grade or altering the drainage on your property in any way, these landscaping works would be exempt from requiring a permit from GSCA. If you are placing any fill material, even if it is to replace previously existing material, a permit may be required, and you should contact our office.

Q: What is the shore road allowance?

A: Some areas along the shoreline have a shore road allowance. This area is an allowance laid out around a lake as part of an original survey for the local municipality. Where a shore road allowance exists and an adjacent landowner is proposing development or alteration within this feature, the local municipality needs to be contacted.

Related Links and Contacts

- [GSCA Nearshore Permit Process Presentation](#)
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pnw-ppe/index-eng.html>
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry <https://www.ontario.ca/page/crown-land-work-permits>
- Transport Canada <https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/programs-633.html>
- Saugeen Ojibway Nation Environmental Office <https://www.saugeenojibwaynation.ca/about/for-proponents/>
- Historic Saugeen Métis <http://saugeenmetis.com/>
- The Métis Nation of Ontario <http://www.metisnation.org/>
- Saugeen First Nation <https://saugeenfirstnation.ca/>
- Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation <https://www.nawash.ca/>
- Local Municipality