

Manitoba Association of Cottage Owners



Issues / Opportunities Advisory

Prepared: March 20, 2011

Issue: *Shoreline Erosion Protection*

Background to the Issue:

- All shorelines are public. There is no such thing as private waterfront.
- Public hearings may be necessary for a shoreline erosion control proposed project to be fully approved
- Many shoreline erosion projects are being constructed due to extreme storms and water levels in 2010
- Under the Manitoba Water Act, all shoreline is subject to 90 foot setback area which is controlled by Manitoba Water Stewardship regardless of property lines on title
- Buyers are not aware of shoreline erosion rates and issues before purchasing a waterfront property

Cautionary Notes:

- Property owners should research upgrade options carefully due to the number and types of design
- Make sure that all relevant authorities are contacted before proceeding.
- No one authority can absolutely offer proper approval of any shoreline project
- Obtain as much information as possible before proceeding.
- Many free books and programs are available to learn about erosion control programs from various agencies
- Obtain legal advice before proceeding
- Get any approvals in writing. If there is nothing in writing, you have no approval to show if someone tries to contest the work you are doing
- Get approval from neighbours. Work on waterfronts can cause unprotected neighbouring properties to erode faster. Without permission, it can be a future issue. Also, different agencies do not necessarily communicate, so they will not know automatically
- Many projects have failed in recent years despite competent engineering for many reasons

Budget Implications:

- Failure to contact all authorities can result in expensive mitigation, fines or other liability issues
- Often neighbouring properties work together to minimize cost and have a more effective continuous form of erosion protection

Policy or Program Implications: What is current Policy or Program for this issue?

- Shoreline erosion mitigation work usually can only be done during a short period in spring when ice is thickest and habitat is least affected by work

- While no clear singular policy is in place in Manitoba, there are rules in the Water Act that must be followed according to Manitoba Water Stewardship Department (WSD)
- Establish Ordinary High Water Mark and property lines for clear reference points
- Contact Manitoba Conservation before proceeding
- Contact Shoreline Erosion Technical Committee (SETC) before proceeding
- Contact federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) before proceeding
- Contact local municipal planning department for local permits
- Contact Association of Professional Engineers and Geotechnicians of Manitoba (APEGM)

Action Taken by MACO:

- MACO is working with other organizations to lobby Manitoba to provide a more clear program with effective rules and regulations for shoreline work to protect environment but to allow developing where it is clear that no wetland or habitat is going to be put at risk
- Posting of basic information on the MACO website

MACO's Recommendations for the Future:

- Provincial guidelines should be monitored and made more accessible to the public
- The Government of Manitoba should develop a single contact point for the public to improve service and connect departments for people wishing to move forward with erosion protection
- Maintain links on the MACO website to facilitate easier access to information
- More studies on projects constructed for success and longevity to provide better advice for the future
- Municipalities and planning departments need to consider the need for future shoreline erosion issues before allowing development near waterways. A secondary plan should be in place to provide options that make sense and meet viability
- Deny or restrict development if risk is apparent to property owners from erosion
- More public awareness and hearings on projects that affect communities and public beaches

Position of MACO

- MACO places high importance on stewardship for waterways in any project affecting shorelines and the riparian zone
- Wetlands should not be developed but should be protected or restored for better water quality and to ensure adequate wildlife habitat
- Our waterways are at risk from projects that increase runoff and drainage. Slowing drainage from the land will reduce the number of pollutants by settling and absorption from vegetation