



Building or Renovating in the Watershed

When building a new home or cottage in the watershed, design and implement measures that will help protect the lake and enhance property value.

1. Identify environmentally sensitive areas on your property

Take photos of creeks, streams, wetlands, ditches, drainage course, shoreline, treed shelterbelts, and protected nature reserves on or adjacent to your property to share with the development officer and contractor.

2. Learn about best practices for construction in a watershed – it's the responsibility of the watershed property owner!

In the planning stage, review the [Alberta Clean Runoff Action Guide 2020](#) and contact PLWA for a [Clean Runoff Property Assessment](#). PLWA will provide guidance on lake-friendly practices and information on how to minimize damage that occurs during construction.

Permits

Development and landscaping projects within Pigeon Lake watershed, including shoreline modifications (e.g. removing vegetation), are subject to regulations that protect the environment including municipal bylaws as well as provincial and federal regulations (e.g. Alberta Water Act). Contact the appropriate authorities for approvals, failing to do so may lead to provincial fines and significant remediation costs.

[Obtaining Permits](#)

Deposits of sand, gravel, and fill on a shoreline can introduce invasive species and can destroy spawning sites and habitat for fish (Fisheries Act).

Construction cannot occur in designated areas during sensitive times when fish spawn or birds nest (Migratory Bird Act and Fisheries Act).

3. Select a lake-friendly contractor

Ensure the contractor is aware of all best management practices (BMPs) and regulations for development in a watershed. Ask the contractor to:

- Propose and implement clean runoff solutions during construction (plwa.ca/cleanrunoff)

- Identify applicable municipal watershed regulations e.g. limitations of impermeable surfaces or tree removal bylaws
- Identify plans for protection of trees and natural vegetation
- Specify their construction practices for working in a watershed e.g. erosion and sediment control plan

4. During construction

- Develop an *Erosion and Sediment Control Plan* to identify: how waste (air pollution, ground deposits, packaging litter, toxic chemicals) will be managed; what chemicals will be used; considerations for environmentally sensitive areas; runoff prevention; and, how to minimize soil compaction
- Install protective barriers around healthy vegetation.
- Implement an *Erosion and Sediment Control Plan* (e.g. covering stockpiles). Soil, pollutants, and sediment can be exposed during new construction. Without proper controls the ecology of the lake will be negatively impacted.

[Alberta Clean Runoff Action Guide on Construction](#)

Pressure treated wood should not be used near the shoreline.

5. After construction

Lake-friendly landscaping should be completed as soon as possible following development. Exposed soil (bare ground) negatively impacts lake health in many ways. Exposed soil can become pollution through airborne dust and stormwater runoff. It is also a breeding ground for invasive and noxious weeds.

Some solutions include:

- Replacing a topsoil depth of at least 30 cm under turf and 60 cm under planting beds
- Planting a large variety of native plants
- Restoring, protecting, and promoting the health of the natural riparian areas
- Complete post-construction cleanup of construction site and adjacent areas

[Alberta Clean Runoff Action Guide on Lake-friendly Landscaping](#)

Additional resources:

[Naturalize your lot: A guide to lake friendly landscaping](#)

[Shoreline Restoration](#)