



Be LakeSmart

Lakes Environmental Association



LakeSmart Tip: Boating Affects Your Shoreline

Wave action can be destructive to a shoreline, battering the land and eroding away the soil. Maine's inland waters are not usually prone to waves, except on particularly windy days. However, increased boat traffic and larger boats are making large waves a regular occurrence. Boats are speeding up the naturally slow processes of erosion, causing soil and excess nutrients to fall into the lake. Waves are also destroying habitat by damaging sensitive plants and bird nests. This is especially true for our iconic loons which nest mere inches from shore.



Wave action resulting from wind is uncontrollable, but the threat from boat wakes can be minimized with safe boating practices. Maine law requires no more than headway speed (i.e., the slowest speed at which steering is possible) within 200 feet of shore, except when following a direct course to pick up or drop off a skier. Reduced wakes near shore reduces the intensity of boat-produced wakes

Any shoreline bank which shows signs of erosion can be reinforced to resist wave action. Planting trees and shrubs will alleviate most erosion, but stone rip rap may be used in areas prone to severe waves. Adding rip rap requires a permit from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Fortunately, a DEP permit-by-rule process is available to reduce the cost and hassle of obtaining a permit in most cases. Lauren Pickford at LEA is available for consultation should you decide to reinforce your lake bank. Lauren's contact information: 207-647-8580 and lauren@mainelakes.org.

LakeSmart is a program of The Maine Lakes Society, run in the Lake Region by the Lakes Environmental Association. For more information about how you can help protect Maine lakes, visit www.mainelakes.org or www.mainelakesociety.org