

Waterlines Express - News from DNR Division of Water

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Beaches in and along public freshwater lakes

As the lake swimming season concludes, lake property owners may be considering improvements for next year, including beach development along or beyond the shoreline. When thinking about such projects, it's crucial to understand that beach materials can negatively impact lake ecosystems. Therefore, the placement of underwater beach fill requires a permit from the DOW under the Lake Preservation Act. Additionally, any material placed landward of the shoreline must be installed behind a barrier.

Permitted activities are outlined in 312 IAC 11-4-4. Underwater beaches are prohibited along shorelines designated as significant wetlands or natural shorelines. For other areas, underwater beaches must meet these criteria:

- Consist of clean, nontoxic pea gravel
- Taper to the waterline or shoreline
- Cover no more than half of the landowner's frontage
- Not exceed 6 inches in thickness
- Not use filter cloth or impermeable materials beneath the fill
- Control erosion from disturbed areas landward of the waterline to prevent soil transport into the lake

In areas of special concern (as defined by 312 IAC 11-2-2) beaches cannot exceed 625 square feet and cannot extend more than 30 feet lakeward of the waterline/shoreline or into water deeper than 6 feet.

In developed areas (as defined by 312 IAC 11-2-7), underwater beaches must not extend more than 50 feet lakeward of the waterline/shoreline or into water deeper than 6 feet.

Assistance with permit applications, example language, and a sample plan sheet for an underwater beach permit are available in the DOW [Permit Application Assistance Manual](#).

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