

Guidelines for Lake Huron Bluff Access

The bluff portions of the Lake Huron shoreline are prone to slope instability and movement from lake erosion, weathering, rotational failures, and slumping. Due to the unstable nature of the shoreline in the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) jurisdiction, there are regulations for development setbacks for new construction, including sheds, gazebos and decks of any size. Any structure along the slope, or close to the top could be damaged or destroyed by a slope failure.

The ABCA understands that the protection of property should be balanced with an owner's desire to enjoy the shoreline. For this reason, we encourage communities to work together to create common access stairs down the bluff slope.

Managing public and community access stairs means the high cost of maintenance and repair caused by winter ice, slope movement and weathering can be shared among multiple property owners.



Slope failure along the Lake Huron Shoreline.



Slope instability causing failure of beach access stairs.

The characteristics of the lake bank, including vegetation and current slope angles, should be respected and maintained when constructing a new access. Substantial alteration of the bank and removal of trees has the potential to destabilize the slope and impact structures at the top of bank and neighbouring properties.

Beach Access Construction

Stairways to access the beach and lake along bluff portions of the shoreline can be constructed without an ABCA permit if the following guidelines are followed:

- Stairs and boardwalks are constructed on regularly spaced posts resting on top of/set into the lake bank without the use of heavy machinery or concrete
- No excavation of the slope
- Stairs are no greater than 1.2 metres (48 inches) wide
- All landings are less than 0.75 square metres (8 square feet)
- No more than one landing is permitted per 3 metres (9.8 feet) of vertical stair height
- Each landing contains no more than one bench, which is of suitable size for two people
- No structures, enclosures, roofs, etc. (temporary or permanent) are to be erected on the stairs or landings
- Vegetation removal is minimal



For more information on slope stability on Lake Huron, refer to 'Shoreline Slope Risks and Hazards Fact Sheet for Property Owners,' found on our abca.ca website at:

<https://www.abca.ca/planning/shorelinemanagement/>

Or Contact us at 519-235-2610