

KEUKA LAKE WATERSHED STEEP SLOPES



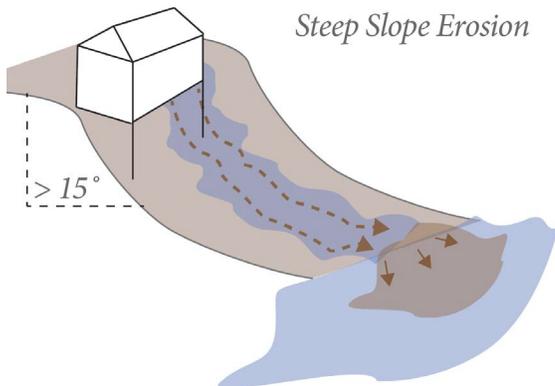
WHAT IS IT?

Steep slopes make up the shorelines of many of the Finger Lakes. While these slopes add beauty to the area, they can also lead to serious environmental harm if they are not properly maintained. Slopes with impervious surfaces, or slopes that lack sufficient vegetation are more likely to erode and become unstable.

Unvegetated slopes allow water to rush downhill carrying debris and sometimes washing out roads and trails. Soil erosion can impact water quality within the lake, and lead to more costly damage during large storms. Unstable slopes can also lead to landslides and significant property damage.



Homes on steep slopes are at risk of erosion if there is not enough vegetation.



Proper vegetation can make road washouts and downslope flooding less likely.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Steep slopes are frequently developed because they have excellent views and access to the lake. Excessive development on slopes can lead to landslides, wash-outs, stormwater redirection, and pollution through excessive digging, the removal of vegetation, or the addition of impervious surfaces like driveways or patios.

All of these effects may cause significant and costly property damage. Damage to public property, like roads and trails, can also put a financial burden on local municipalities, stretching budgets and reducing the quality of public services.

POLICY OPTIONS

Development Laws

Laws applying to steep slopes can regulate the amount of land that can be disturbed in any project or covered with impervious surfaces, generally as a percentage of the land.

The construction process can also be regulated, including stormwater drainage and vegetation removal.

It is common for construction on slopes of greater than 12° to be prohibited.

Zoning Overlays

Overlay districts can impose design guidelines and regulate allowable land uses to ensure safe development.

Other requirements like minimum vegetation coverage and density limitations can also be included.

Overlay districts do not change existing zoning districts, and it is up to planning and zoning boards to ensure that such policies continue to be enforced once they are created.

Municipal Regulations

Site Plan Review and Subdivision guidelines allow municipalities to direct the character of future development by ensuring that individual development projects are in line with the long term interests of area residents.

By adding provisions specific to steep slopes, municipalities can protect viewsheds, public infrastructure and water quality.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Steep Slopes

Learn more about how steep slopes can threaten water quality by visiting these websites:

Steep Slope Presentation from the Canandaigua Lake Association -

www.canandaigualakeassoc.org/custFiles/files/Steep%20slopes%20presentation%20for%20use%20on%20website.pdf

Overlay Zoning and Development Laws

Learn more about zoning and development laws that could be useful in your municipality by visiting these websites:

Genessee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council Information -

www.gflrpc.org/Publications/Canandaigua/Report/1BLandUseTools.pdf

Examples of Steep Slope Development Laws from the EPA -

wiki.epa.gov/watershed2/index.php/Controlling_Development_on_Steep_Slopes

Municipal Regulations

Learn more about site plan and other regulations that could help your municipality manage steep slopes by visiting these websites:

Municipal Strategies for Steep Slopes from Southern Tier Central -

www.stcplanning.org/usr/Program_Areas/Flood_Mitigation/SCAP_steepslopes%202010_02_21_CR.pdf

Watershed Information

G/FLRPC Keuka Lake Watershed Planning Guide - www.gflrpc.org/Publications/Keuka/Plan/Guide/LandUseGuide.pdf

Watershed Plans: Protecting and Restoring Water Quality from NYS Dept. of State -

www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTtqfVN3MfQ

Watershed information from the EPA - water.epa.gov/type/watersheds/index.cfm

Canandaigua Lake Report - www.fllt.org/linkfiles/cndgareport.pdf

Seneca Lake Watershed Management Plan - www.gflrpc.org/Publications/SenecaLakeWMP.htm

For more information, or to fill out our survey, visit www.sustainablekeuka.net

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