



DESIGN. CRAFT. PRESERVE.

LAKESLIDE SLOPE PLANNING GUIDE

SMART HARDSCAPES FOR SAFE & BEAUTIFUL WATERFRONT ACCESS

Up in northern Minnesota, July and August represent peak lake season. It is our fleeting chance to enjoy the pristine water, gather family on the dock, and build memories. However, hauling heavy coolers, paddleboards, and gear down a steep, slippery incline can turn a perfect day into a dangerous obstacle course. This planning guide transforms the principles of structural hardscaping into an actionable roadmap for your property.

PART 1: WATERFRONT ACCESS RISK ASSESSMENT

Early in the spring, a makeshift dirt trail or an uneven grassy slope might seem manageable. By mid-summer, after hundreds of trips up and down to the dock, soil erosion and foot traffic expose severe safety flaws. Use this quick assessment to evaluate your current shoreline access:

- ☐ **Visible Soil Erosion & Runoff Tracks:**
During or immediately after a heavy rain, where is the water pooling? Is it draining away from your home's foundation, or sitting in a low spot near the house?
- ☐ **Slippery or Unstable Footing Underweight:**
Family members or weekend guests find themselves slipping on loose gravel, shifting dirt, or wet, steep grass while carrying heavy lake gear.
- ☐ **Lack of Level Staging Zones:**
The hillside flows directly into the water or dock edge with no transition zone to stand comfortably, store life jackets, or safely launch watercraft.
- ☐ **Absence of Secondary Stability Measures:**
Children, elderly guests, or anyone carrying a kayak must balance without structural handrails, consistent step rises, or deep, comfortable treads.

The Environmental Impact of Inaction

Every time a primitive trail washes out, it causes severe damage to your shoreline. The resulting sediment runoff clouds the water and disrupts fragile aquatic habitats. Professional hardscaping simultaneously eliminates your safety liability while structurally anchoring the hillside to protect the shoreline ecosystem.

PART 2: ENGINEERING THE CLIMB: MATERIAL FRAMEWORKS

A permanent solution requires structures that tie directly into the hillside, resisting gravity, shifting soil patterns, and intense freeze-thaw cycles. Throwing down thin, loose pavers will not suffice.

Heavy Natural Stone Steps

Massive, dense slabs weighing hundreds of pounds resist shifting entirely due to sheer mass and deep, compacted gravel bases. Built-in surface texture provides natural slip resistance.



PART 3: MAXIMIZING THE WATERFRONT: SHORELINE LANDINGS

A safe staircase solves the transition down the hill, but a high-value layout optimizes the space where the stairs meet the water. Integrating a level, flat landing pad, whether natural terrain or using flagstone pavers, expands your usable outdoor living zone significantly to utilize for comfort and seating, or for gear and launch staging.



Ready to Transform Your Waterfront Access?

At Boulder Creek Outdoor Living, we specialize in creating custom, ruggedly beautiful hardscapes engineered specifically to thrive in our unique northern climate and demanding terrains. Let's turn your slippery hillside into the absolute crown jewel of your lake home.



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