

Section 210.5. Rocky Shores

A. Definition

Rocky shores include naturally occurring shorelines composed of bedrock ledge or boulder-strewn areas, extending from below mean low water to above the mean high water mark. These areas frequently contain tide pools.

B. Findings

1. Rocky shores play an important role in storm damage prevention and provide habitat to specially adapted assemblages of organisms. Gently sloping terraces of bedrock and boulders dissipate wave energy and are effective buffers that protect the mainland from storm damage. Rocky shores harbor a diversity of specially adapted plants and animals that can withstand both wave action and occasional desiccation. Tide pools are particularly beautiful features that should be protected.

2. Many rocky shores, especially in the lower Bay, are well recognized for their scenic value. Beavertail Point in Jamestown and sections of Ocean drive in Newport are notable examples. Rocky shores are often important tourist attractions, and are used for surf casting and skin diving by increasing numbers of people.

C. Policies

1. The Council's goal is to preserve and protect these features for their role in erosion prevention, for the unique assemblages of organisms that they may support, and for their recreation and scenic value.

2. The alteration of rocky shores abutting Type 1 water areas, excepting approved projects for shoreline protection, is prohibited.

3. On shorelines adjacent to Type 1 and 2 waters, the Council shall prohibit construction on or alteration of rocky shores and contiguous areas where such construction or alteration has a reasonable probability of causing or accelerating erosion or degrading a generally recognized scenic vista.

In determining whether a reasonable probability exists that increased erosion or loss of scenic value will result from the proposed construction or alteration, the Council shall consider the following: (a) the exposure of the feature to the erosional forces of tidal currents, storm waves and flooding, wind and surface runoff, and other such natural processes; (b) the composition of the feature involved and any significant plant or animal communities present; (c) existing types and levels of use and alteration; and (d) inclusion of the feature on an accepted inventory of significant scenic or natural areas or evidence of general public use and enjoyment as a scenic or natural area.

4. The construction of alterations to rocky shores adjacent to Type 3, 4, 5, and 6 waters may be permitted if (a) the construction is undertaken to accommodate a designated priority use for the abutting water area, (b) the applicant has examined all reasonable alternatives and the Council has determined that the selected alternative is the most reasonable, and (c) only the minimum alteration necessary to support the designated priority use is made.