

Pervious pavers: An ecologically friendly option for patio, drives and sidewalks.



If you are planning an outdoor project be sure to ask your landscaper about the option of pervious products to reduce runoff that threatens the lake and your well.

Generally, when it rains in natural areas 1/3 of the water evaporates, 1/3 is absorbed by plants and transposed back to the air and the rest *runs off*, including any pollutants, into our ground and surface water.

Development creates many hardened surfaces and compacted soils (*impervious surfaces*) that allow a larger proportion of rainwater to rush over delivering an increased threat to our shore, lake and wells. Your roof, patio, deck and driveway are probably all impervious surfaces.

Handling this *run off* with retention, diversion and absorption techniques includes vegetative buffers, trees, rain gardens, rain barrels and swales. Reducing the source of pollutants is also important such as not using yard fertilizer, cleaning up animal waste and careful handling of fuels and home chemicals.

If you are modifying outdoor space, such as adding a patio or expanding your driveway (even gravel), you are required to limit the total of *impervious surface* area to 15% of your property within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark (OHWM). There are options to overcome this limit including adding mitigation

projects but how about instead use an alternative to that hardened, impervious construction material?

I was recently introduced to “**pervious (permeable) pavers**” by one of our members who had elected to use them for a new patio. The finished product is indistinguishable from standard pavers and looked great with the surrounding native stone. The cost is about 25% more than standard pavers but is an investment in protecting the environment and can prevent paying for mitigating processes to satisfy the impervious surface limit. Maintenance costs are similar to concrete.

The landscaper who worked with our member reports these products have been used successfully for years throughout Northeast Wisconsin. The pavers are durable and even can be used for driveways . No special equipment is needed but special attention to site preparation is important.



CVS pharmacy in Sturgeon Bay has a section of their parking lot composed of these pavers.

We discussed other pervious options including artificial turf and pervious preparations for trails. Technology is advancing so be sure to ask your builder/landscaper for options to lessen the impact of development on our lake and wells.