

Pervious Paths



What's a pervious surface?

A surface that lets water flow through gaps and soak into the ground. Having pervious paths help direct foot traffic on a stable surface to prevent erosion, soil compaction, and other issues in the surrounding area.



Pervious Path Design

- Pervious paths should be designed to slow down and absorb rain water and snowmelt into the ground or allow runoff to gently flow into nearby vegetation. This will help keep the path dry, prevent icing in the winter, and protect your property from erosion.
- Paths should be less than 6' wide.
- Paths should avoid being constructed on steep slopes and should meander to prevent erosion during storms. In areas where moderate to steep slopes are unavoidable, use water bars, infiltration steps, or wooden stairs with gaps between the boards.
- Contact your local Code Enforcement Officer if establishing a new path or revamping an existing path within the shoreland zone to determine if you need a permit.

Pervious Types of Paths

Grass \$

Suitable for light foot traffic on flat to gentle slopes. May require watering, overseeding, and aerating. Will require frequent mowing.

Wood Chips/Bark Mulch \$\$

Suitable for moderate foot traffic on flat to gentle slopes. May require occasional raking, weeding, and mulch replacement as it decomposes.

Crushed Stone \$\$

Suitable for heavy foot traffic on flat to moderate slopes. May require occasional raking, weeding, and stone replacement.

Infiltration Steps \$\$

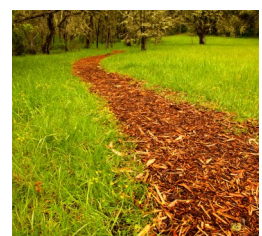
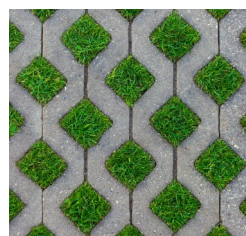
Suitable for heavy foot traffic on moderate slopes. May require occasional stone cleaning and replacement.

Stepping Stones \$\$\$

Suitable for moderate foot traffic on flat to moderate slopes. Can use grass or crushed stone around stepping stones.

Pervious Pavers \$\$\$\$

Suitable for heavy foot traffic on flat to moderate slopes. Comes in variety of styles.



What's a water bar?

Water bars are logs or timber placed diagonally across a sloping path to divert water to a stable, vegetated area. Steeper slopes require more frequent water bars.

Materials List

- 8" diameter rot-resistant lumber or log
- 18" rebar at each edge of the log or lumber
- 3/4" crushed stone to backfill around the water bar
- Non-woven geotextile fabric

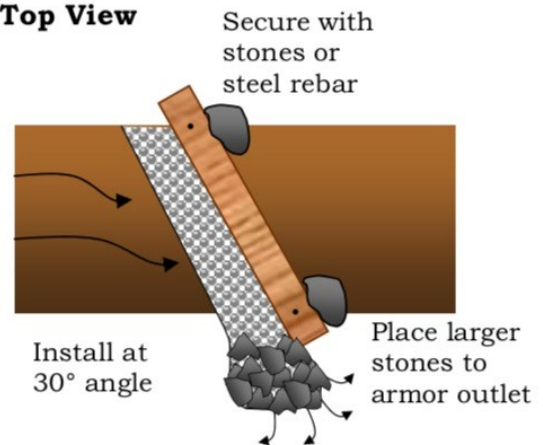
Installation

1. **Dig the trench** at a 30° angle across the path. It should be deep enough for the lumber to be almost flush with the trail. The water bar should extend off both sides of the path.
2. **Place the log or lumber** snugly in the trench and secure on the downhill side with large stones or rebar pins. Rebar should be pounded into 1/2" holes in the wood 6" from the edge. Soil and gravel should be packed on the downhill side.
3. **Fill a 12" wide and 6" deep trench along the uphill side of the bar with crushed stone**, leaving a few inches of the wood exposed.
4. **Cover all disturbed soil** with seed and mulch or leaf litter.

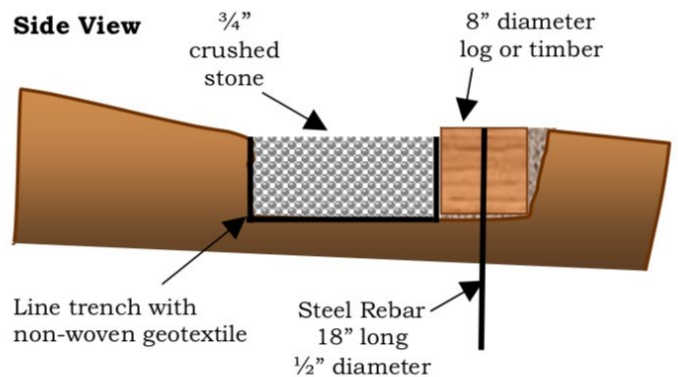
Maintenance

- Inspect and remove any leaves, sediment, and other debris built up behind the water bar after storms.
- Replace crushed stone as needed.
- Replace log or lumber if showing signs of rot.

Top View



Side View



Diagrams and image courtesy of Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance