

Can I burn lake debris?

I am a lakefront property owner. Every spring I remove a quantity of limbs and logs that wash in. Over the course of the summer I accumulate another pile. Amounts vary, but in general I ask if it is permissible for me to have a small 'campfire' and burn the dried piles of debris? It does not seem right to merely push it back into the water, and the trash collectors will not take 'yard waste'.

You are correct that pushing logs and limbs into the lake is wrong. Streamside and waterfront property owners create navigation hazards when disposing of trees, thinking that 'the lake will take care of them'.

To the extent that you have a location to compost yard waste, raking and incorporating small amounts of flotsam is a good practice. It is a great use of summertime weeds that wash ashore!

From the NYSDEC webpage "*In 2009, New York toughened restrictions on open burning to reduce harmful air pollutants and help prevent wildfires. While the burn ban regulation allows residential brush burning for most of the year in towns with a populations of less than 20,000, it prohibits open burning in all communities during early spring when the bulk of New York's wildfires typically occur. The state regulation prohibits the burning of garbage at all times and in all places.*" The open burning period is generally closed mid-March to mid-May.

So it would appear that a small fire (logs under 8' long and no more than 6" in diameter) is otherwise permissible. Small and under control - **attended** - would be key. You do not want your neighbors to call the fire department. Do not burn if the wind is strong or if it carries smoke toward your neighbors.

Take note of these provisions of the ECL part 215 covering air regulations (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/regs/4261.html>):

(c) *Camp fire*. A camp fire or any other outdoor open fire less than three feet in height, and less than four feet in length and width or diameter.

(f) *Untreated wood*. For the purposes of this Part, any wood or lumber which is not chemically treated, coated, stained, sealed, glued or otherwise adulterated. *Untreated wood* does not include such materials as pressure treated lumber, plywood, particle board, fiberboard, and oriented strand board.

(g) *On-site burning*. The burning of material, grown or generated on a particular property, in an open fire on the same property. For purposes of this definition, the *same property* shall include only property that is geographically contiguous and under the control or ownership of the same person.