

Our Most Frequently Asked Questions

What are these Mats used for?

Our Mats create firm, weed-free, surfaces on soft lake bottoms. There are three versions

Boatlift Mats — are made to hold heavy weight, like lifts, docks and even deck supports.

MuckMat Pros — create firm, 100% weed-free, lake bottoms to walk on.

LakeMat Pros — create weed-free lake bottoms, but don't provide support like MuckMat Pro.

What are they made from?

All our frames are all made of tough, rigid, "aluminized" steel.

The Mat materials we use are made for building highways on soft, unstable soils.

BoatLift Mat material is super-strong, low-stretch, woven geotextile fabric.

MuckMat Pro and LakeMat Pro material is non-woven, gas-permeable geotextile.

MuckMat Pro has a "geogrid" making it perform like a giant snowshoe.

What size are they?

The BoatLift Mat series are all 14-feet wide, and come in lengths from 9- to 24-feet.

MuckMat Pro and LakeMat Pro come 12X24 and 12x14.

DockMats are 5'9"x14'

What keeps them down?

The steel frames weigh between 60 and 80 pounds and the fabrics are gas permeable. They stay put, they won't float or drift away — even in rivers.

How long do they last?

The short answer — if you're old enough to ask the question, they'll probably last longer than we will. The fabric manufacturers claim it lasts thousands of years underground. Who knows?

The only real study we found stated the fabric "begins to get brittle at 35 years."

Won't the frames rust?

The Titanic has sat on the ocean floor since 1912, but it pretty much looks the same as the day it sank. Metal rusts much slower underwater because air is 21% oxygen and water is about 1%.

Oxidation (rust) needs oxygen. Bacteria will have eaten the Titanic long before it rusts out.

Will the material rip or tear?

Not very easily. When it has, it's involved a boat prop and alcoholic beverages. It take 130 pounds of pressure at 3/8ths of an inch to punch a hole in the non-woven fabric. And the BoatLift Mat fabric is even stronger. But if it does, it's 100% guaranteed, we'll replace it free.

Can you put sand or gravel on them?

That's exactly what these materials were designed for in the first place. The grid and fabric of the MuckMat Pro form small "dimples" when sand is added, holding it place. The MuckMat Pro is the best soil separation there is. LakeMat Pros typically aren't sanded simple because they're usually meant to be moved around.

How much sand?

We've seen from one- to eight-inches. Three inches seems about average. One yard of sand equals about one-inch covering a 12x24 MuckMat Pro — and one yard of dry sand weighs about a ton — which is why you don't put sand on LakeMat Pros if you're going to move them.

How do they kill weeds?

Pretty simple, they prevent sunlight from reaching the weeds. No sun means no photosynthesis, which means, no growth.

Why not just use tarps or something?

There are a few problems with tarps and other materials.

First, they trap gases from the decaying weeds — and we mean A LOT OF GASES. Trapped gas makes tarps float up. You've probably seen sanded tarps where the sand eventually slides off and the plastic eventually bubbles up.

Second, they're slippery when wet, making them dangerous to walk on. So unless you want to have a whole beach that's a "Slip 'N Slide" they're not good.

Third, they don't last very long, and pieces begin tearing off and contribute to "lake pollution."

Fourth, wildlife get tangled in them, turtles and fish nibble and ingest frayed tarp edges.

Finally, tarps suffocate the benthic organisms in the lake bottom soil, because they don't let gases (oxygen) or water pass through. This is a reason why some states are very restrictive on the use of what's called "benthic barriers."

Are these Mats benthic barriers?

Not exactly, because they don't stay flush on the lake bottom unless there's weight like a human foot or a footpad on a lift, pushing down. Otherwise the fabric stays between 1/2" to an inch off the bottom, letting water and gases pass through.

What about permits?

The rule of thumb is, if it's "seasonal," like rolling docks, they *don't* need a permit. If it's "permanent," like a seawall, they do. Boatlift Mats are supports for "seasonal" products. MuckMat Pros can also be "seasonal" unless they're sanded, which makes them pretty permanent.

LakeMat Pros are definitely “seasonal.” Because this type of weed control is a gray area, some agents may say a permit is needed, others will say it isn’t.

To our knowledge, we’ve never had a customer turned down for a permit. But, we’ve had those who apply and then have to wait several months to get one. Some people may feel it’s a case of “Better to ask forgiveness than to beg permission.”

Will weeds grow on the Mats?

If you follow instructions, no. There are two ways weeds can grow back. One, if you don’t clean off a Mat, eventually enough sediment and nutrients will settle and provide a base for plants to grow.

Second, some weeds in shallow water, like hydrilla down south, may send tendrils up through the material. This happens when a LakeMat Pro is left in one spot too long. The simple fix is pick it up and move it around every month or so during the growing season. The Mat may need to be taken out and cleaned once a year, depending on how aggressive the weeds are.

Why not get a Pontoon Mat for a jet ski lift and have lots of extra room to walk?

NOT GOOD. Boatlift Mat material is made to hold heavy weight, long term. The more weight that’s on it, the firmer it gets. A jet ski lift, plus you and your family, isn’t nearly enough to pull it tight. It will stay “spongy” feeling. You’d be far better off using a MuckMat Pro for this, they stretch further faster.

Can I set a dock on a MuckMat Pro?

Yes, they work awesome, just like for a jet ski lift. The instructions show how to “beef up” a MuckMat Pro to hold more weight for extended periods.

Can I set a boat lift on a MuckMat Pro?

No. MuckMat Pros aren’t meant to hold that kind of load. They can hold sand spread across the entire surface — but not a heavy load that pulls inward. You’d need the frame. BoatLift Mat frames are bigger and much stronger to carry that type of load.

Should they be taken out in the winter?

No, not unless you want to clean them thoroughly (if you have hydrilla), or it’s required. Ice can’t hurt them and they won’t float away. You will want to clean them in the spring though.

How do you clean them?

Leave them right on the lake bottom and use a push broom to sweep them off just like a garage floor. If the sediment is a too thick, use an upside-down lake rake, or a squeegee first, then sweep.

A power washer works great, yes even underwater, or any pump designed to move a lot of water. Trash pumps work well. Pumps that move air don't work. They move air at high speed, but have little torque.

What about fish?

Don't set anything over fish beds while they're spawning — that's just rude. Most freshwater fish prefer or "need" a fairly solid bottom to bed in. If you create an area with a solid, sandy bottom you'll be amazed how many fish will bed on it. Plus, you create "border cover" along the edges, which attracts bigger game fish.

Have a question we didn't answer?

Call, text or email me:

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Or visit: LakeMat.com

PS, You want to see a great reason to not use toxic chemicals to treat lake weeds in your lake?

Check out this northern pike (yes pike, not a muskie). The guy holding her is 5'9", putting the fish at about 60" — you pike people know what that means, right? Unverified (but obvious) State Record Pike!

He put her back in her small, mid-Michigan lake that's never been poisoned with herbicides.

She's happy, and so are we.

