

## Comments on Dock-Related Issues in Minnesota

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Grand Rapids, MN

47 people signed in; 21 comment forms received; 2 letters received

### 1) **What do you value about spending time on lakes and rivers? How do docks enhance or detract from these values?**

- Peace and quiet are the best times. We have a modest platform (6x10) only 20' from shore, still in the reeds. I do a lot of reading on the recliner we have on our dock.
- Peace and tranquility – watching wildlife, boating, swimming, fishing, seeing shoreline that is wooded. Docks and boatlifts should be limited on each parcel so that you still have views of natural areas. The platform size should be limited according to lot size – as was said the decks should be on shore – not over water.
- The peaceful tranquility, the wildlife, swimming, canoeing, kayaking, campfires, sitting. Big docks, boatlifts distract from the natural beauty.
- I enjoy the blue clear waters, wildlife, wooded shoreline; fishing and quiet pontoon rides with family and friends. Detract - too large, too many, too colorful. Docks should have wood decks to blend in. As I look out onto lakes I see the reflection of aluminum docks with plastic decking, painted metal and wood are easier on the eyes.
- Peacefulness, relaxation, enjoyment of surroundings (nature). Detract - lend nothing to beauty of lake-river = dock is a detriment.
- Docks enable me to access my boats and lifts and fishing.
- Family/fun/relaxation/recreation - the docks provide access to lakes. They add value to lake property both monetary and just in enjoyment value. I believe they only enhance and do not detract at all. It's not up to anyone else to tell me how my dock should look.
- What we value the most is the ability to share the beauty, family fellowship, recreation and leisure time at our lake home with others. Without our dock system, all this would be impossible, and a properly maintained dock system ADDS to the appearance and value of our property.
- Scenic beauty - docks detract from this, diversity of wildlife, fishing - docks and associated boat maneuvering detract from this, recreating/boating.
- Spending time with family and friends. Freedom to use my property as I choose. Docks enhance by enabling me to be on the water with family swimming, fishing, and visiting.
- Beauty, fishing, fun. In general on our lake docks are not a problem.
- They do both – allow safe access to boat and minimize shore erosion. They encroach on private neighbors and are ugly.
- Docks and boatlifts are not much to look at if one enjoys the natural look along the lakeshore. The dock only serves the owner and has no value to anyone else.
- I do fish from my dock. My wife and I will sit on the dock in the evening to enjoy the sunset.
- Fishing, relaxation, looking at houses.
- Quick access to my boats on the water. A nice dock system shows the property owner is proud of his property and has a nice clean appearance. A “rusting and in need of repair dock system” has a negative appearance.
- I enjoy the view of the shoreline, the feeling of being close to nature and seeing wildlife. Large docks with boatlifts and canopies impede the views and intrude on the waterway's space. Multiple docks just compound the visual blight. Another irritating element are the inflatable huge rafts which are anchored in the lake. Awful.
- Docks are no distraction.

- Our dock is our center of activity in the summer. The kids fish off it all the time, my wife, sisters and friends love to lay out on the platform. When we ski and tube it's nice to pull up to so people can load and unload easy plus we have a friend in a wheelchair, so when we go on the pontoon the larger platform makes it easy to get her on and off.
- I value the water, fishing, swimming and boating. Docks allow me to enjoy our beach with our kids and their friends. We have many friends that join us on our dock. We fish from our dock. We need lots of space to allow our kids and cousins to fish – young kids need lots of dock space.

## 2) If you own or use a dock, what do you use it for?

- Peace and quiet. We also moor 2 boats on either side of our dock; our sailboat is on a bay out past the reeds.
- Access to our boat - a bench to sit and view the lake, occasionally fishing off the dock, occasionally tubing and waterskiing.
- Yes to sit on and to park a boat. Small, narrow dock. Read; enjoy the stars, moon, and loons.
- We have a 30' dock with a boatlift along side. In earlier years we jumped off while swimming. Now we sit and dangle our feet in the water.
- Merely for lake access for a fishing boat and thus far I am doing well without a dock.
- Access to my boatlifts and fishing.
- Yes, getting to boat. Fishing (by the way, that is where the fish congregate, there is no detriment to fish!!). Swimming. Just hanging out. If you want us to let our yard grow back to natural we need a big dock.
- Yes we own a dock. We use our dock for access to our boat, fishing and just sitting there enjoying the sights and sounds of nature around us.
- Used for mooring a single boat only.
- Family activities, entertaining, access to watercraft.
- Access, swimming, park boat.
- Swimming off and boat docking.
- Fishing, swimming, access to boatlift, reading.
- Docking a pontoon boat. Launching a canoe.
- Fishing, sunbathing, parking boats.
- Access to my boats, fishing from the dock, swimming, picnicking, sun bathing and visiting with friends who are boating.
- We have a dock that is 3-4' wide and about 30' long. We park a boat on each side (no lift or canopy) and also use the dock for a swim "platform" and for sitting and enjoying the ducks!
- Relaxing, fishing, swimming, boat tie-up.
- We use our dock as a gathering point. People love it. Our shoreline is always shaded and most of our family loves the sun so the dock is very popular, plus when friends stop by with the boat it's nice to have a place they can tie-off and not be crowded. Our dock is everything to us in the summer.
- Boating, swimming, fishing and visiting with friends and relatives.

## 3) In your opinion, how large of a dock is needed for reasonable access to public waters? In what circumstances are large dock platforms reasonable for riparian access?

- Our dock would need to be 100 feet to get past the reeds and shallow water. Because we value the quiet and fish we decline to do this. We feel we have reasonable access given the nature of our shoreland. Large dock platforms are never reasonable if larger than your 170 sq. ft. limit – such activities can take place on shore.
- 4' wide is wide enough to access the boat. Platform - 170 sq. ft. is plenty for the single home use.

- You really do need much length or width to access the lake. 6' wide – 10' ft. long.
- 6' max width and as long as it takes to get to 4' of water. If it Ts or an L then no more then 8' and only one- not a bunch of slips.
- A single strip to gain water access (limited size). No oversize docks.
- Long enough to access the lake to navigate only the water. Platforms up to 8x8 are fine anything larger is excessive. Length of dock or sq. footage of dock should not be limited because of differences in depth to navigable waters.
- My opinion - as long as the dock does not pose a safety issue its fine - no size restriction - common sense should be the rule.
- My thoughts on this are use what you need and leave the rest. Safety is of utmost importance but beyond that, should we be growing government or spending tax dollars on what size docks can we have? If you have a handicapped person, is a 3-4-foot dock enough? If you share a dock with your neighbor is 3 foot safe? Common sense goes a long way.
- An 8 ft. wide dock should be adequate in virtually all cases without “T”, “L” or platform attachments. Do not allow plat forms. Local governments already allow reduced shoreline setbacks for these structures. Wider docks/platforms may be reasonable only for a few commercial businesses.
- The size of the dock that accesses the water at 8' is fine. Platforms should be up to the landowner - everyone has different applications and circumstances.
- Rules now seem sufficient. Permit for larger seems reasonable. Don't think a “fee” solves - it may just allow people who want it to “pay”?
- Handicap access is a reason for a large dock. The minimum necessary to access the lake while reducing shoreline impact.
- 4 foot wide seems ok for us. The 8x16 is plenty big - anything bigger means there are many of them things parked there.
- My dock is 5 ft. wide with another 5 ft. extension on the end. My wife thought this too large. We have not destroyed the aquatic plants. There is a lot of cabbage reeds below the dock. Crappies did nest close by. I would be willing to pay a small fee (\$25 to \$50) for only 10 foot dock.
- Depends on area of location and amount of use.
- Enough dock to get to water deep enough for use. An 8' wide dock is sufficient and the length to be determined by the property owner. What is the definition of “large”?
- Reasonable access can be gained by a 5' wide dock at most with a similar platform. An 8' dock platform seems too large to me. The only time a long dock should be necessary is to get to deep water through wetland areas/marshy areas.
- There should be no further regulation.
- I bought a lake home to have a place to meet friends and relatives. We need as much space as possible. Small kids need a lot of room when fishing (to avoid injury). Teenagers need room for water skis and wake boards. 12'x20' is not too big for 8-10 people with swimming apparatus.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>4) Docks contribute to shoreline crowding in your area.</b>	8	4	1	3	4

5) The privatization of public waters concerns you.	8	1		4	8
6) Docks that exceed 8' wide should require a license and fee.	2	2	3	4	9
7) The amount of shoreline frontage covered by a dock should be limited.	7	1		2	10
8) Dock numbers should be limited to 1 per lot.	8			3	9
9) Your community has adequate enforcement of local dock regulations.	3	5	2	6	3

**10) Other thoughts or comments regarding docks in Minnesota.**

- The GP began this year? By what process? In isolation? What is to say DNR doesn't change rules after we buy our docks? Who makes the final decision on the new GP? Are you having meetings in every county? Decision will be made w/o informing each and every lake property owner? Who comes to determine if you can get a permit? So there is no reasonable justification? Where do email comments go? How will comments be organized? Is there any limit to numbers for boats you can have? Should have side yard setback in state rules. Small population of input to make changes on 10k lakes. How many more meetings? Why not call MSP news stations there? Issue surfaced 2 yrs. ago. When I buy a boat, I get a boating brochure (get dock brochure when buy docks). Did you give any consideration for lake class in setting current GP? Are you anticipating regs. on boatlifts in near future? What happens to people who have oversized docks? Area they going to check docks? Should be regs. on boatlifts (canopies). So only regs. is to enforce 8 ft. wide?
- Another important concern is the placement of docks that angle out and cross in front of the neighbor's property. We need rules that require a dock to extend only within the lines that would extend out from the property boundaries. Also the boat canopy colors should be regulated so no bright colors are allowed. Earth colors only! Lighting should also be restricted for safety purposes only and shining down.
- We have a problem with adjoining property owner angling his dock across our shoreline. Definitely should be a setback from the property line for docks (20' would be good) and the dock should go straight out from the shore.
- On our lake the large long docks make it unsafe to swim laps - ducks get stuck under them, people keep so much "stuff" on their huge docks - bottles, toys etc., blow into the water. Large "social" areas encourage smokers to just throw their butts. Water skiers cannot land safely. Most are not nice looking.
- Materials should be wood on painted metal. Canopies, size, color. How the angle out into the lake from shore.
- They should be controlled and regimented to protect rivers and lakes

- I believe there should be a balance between natural to dock usage. But I believe it is better to error to protection of public waters. No regulation of dock length except to gain access to navigable waters. But limit width and platform. I believe 8x8 platform is reasonable. No limit on private boatlifts.
- I think there is too much government already. There are way bigger fish to fry in this state than to worry about how big my dock is. I say it's complete B.S. that it is hurting the lake or the fish. The only thing it hurts is a tree hugging canoe boat driver who could just as easily find another lake or river in the woods to go eat their granola bars and bottled water.
- Should we as taxpayers in MN be concerned with length or width of docks if they're safe not posing a hazard to our neighbors? NO Instead of making new laws governing docks in MN, shouldn't we be thinking and voting about ways in which to do a better job with tax dollars the state has now? Not growing government makes sense, common sense. How about medical insurance, roads and bridges.... things everyone needs? But Docks??? Come on people think about it!
- Side yard setbacks should be established for all docks. Where sensitive habitat areas have been identified, the sizes of docks and associated maneuvering areas should be restricted to some minimal reasonable size. In other areas, limit the amount of an individual property's lake frontage that can be used for docking and maneuvering (i.e. the narrower the lot, the smaller the docking area - on larger lots, specify a maximum width for these activities as a percentage of lot frontage or a specified width, whichever is less.
- I would like you to post the comments when people call in and complain. I can't believe it's as big of an issue as you are making it out to be. I also don't think anybody is thinking about the dollars dock revenue brings into the economy for local installers, manufactures, etc.
- Docks should extend only in front of owners property – 10 ft. boundaries (same as building on shore).
- The majority of lakeshore owners don't need anything bigger than we have now. The main thing is to make sure everyone knows there is a dock law and then 95% will live with it. Those that need more are always out there complaining. I find that a number of lakeshore owners are selfish and feel they acquire certain rights by purchasing the land. It is a hard sell to convince them they are destroying the thing they came to enjoy. You must continue to have education that explains why big docks are bad for the lake and general public. As president of Jessie Lake Association I have not heard anyone complain about the current law so I think it is working fine.
- There has to be some control over docks.
- Current rules are sufficient.
- Each person uses the water differently. Some people only use their property on weekends; others only in specific months; others daily and/or weekly. Some people use the water to fish, ski, tube, sail, jet ski, paddleboat, canoe, cruise, dining, going to restaurants, visiting friends – all with a boat for a particular use. Some people will do all of the above, others only one or two things. How can you regulate all types of activity with one set of regulations?
- The number of docks is more of a concern on Pokegama Lake than size. So far sizes seem fairly normal but in some areas you look down the lakeshore and you can only see docks, lifts, canopies. So much for seeing the shoreline.
- You already have the law and the permitting process in place, why don't you use the permitting process for anything over 8' wide and have a fee for the extra square footage. There are some areas on lakes that should only have 8' platforms, but there are a lot of areas where bigger platforms would not hurt the lake quality. The word visual impact is a joke also. Simply that means certain people don't like the looks of other peoples equipment. Well I could go to their places and find some things that would have a "visual impact" on me. I've been in the dock business for 25 years. Most (about 2/3) don't even get put into the water until after the fishing

opener thus not effecting fish spawning, also I can't see how you can have weed rollers a legal piece of equipment, that definitely kills vegetation.

- As Americans we have the right to own property. Minnesota has many more lakes than are being used by the public. It is a waste of time, resources and money for the DNR or other agencies to monitor dock size or use. Develop more parks for public use and leave property (taxpayers) owners alone. We deserve privacy for the financial sacrifices we have made to purchase and own lakeshore property. We do not need more rules and regulations regarding docks.

**We anticipate holding one or two meetings in St. Cloud this fall. The Meetings will be comprised of small-groups of stakeholders. The intent is to develop recommendations that address issues and concerns related to docks. Who would you recommend participate in these smaller group discussions, and why? How we contact them?**

- Area lake associations.
- Small lake residents should have a voice.
- Local people that have an interest and that have real concerns about ecology, environment, and waters.
- Minnesota Waters and local county and watershed lake associations along with manufacturers.
- Lakeshore owners, dock manufacturers, dock dealers. Not just a bunch of older retired people wanting to put a stop to progress.
- Stakeholders in what? Landowners? Manufacturers? Retailers? Why develop anything? And who's asking for recommendations? Is it the public who spends their earned dollars on their lake or river places or is it the people who feel they have less and feel they deserve more? Why are we wasting time and money on this?
- Lakeshore property owners, DNR, dock manufacturers.
- I think the dock manufacturer must be limited as they have a distorted view. Lakeshore owners could be represented by lake associations (COLA). The general public and fishermen can be represented by guides. Izaak Walton and government such as county commissioner.
- Lake associations, dealers.
- Brian Napstad, Aitkin County Commissioner, Floe International representative, lake association officers.
- Generally, board members from lake associations and county commissioners.
- Residents of Big Sandy Lake.
- Rick Hughes, lakeshore owner and dock service owners. Gary Johnson, representative of Shoremaster, Inc.
- I would be happy to participate in these meetings. I have lived on lakes most of my life and have much to offer – Dennis Leisten, Aitkin.