

Listserv Update for Structures in Public Waters Rule Revision - May 2009

We held the last of 4 Advisory Group meetings for the revision of the structure rules in early April. Even though the advisory group has finished with its formal meetings, conversations are continuing.

The online survey we offered was a success, with almost 6500 people responding from at least 70 counties. Survey results can be found on our website at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt_section/pwpermits/structures_rules.html.

The survey results are useful to let us know something about what people think about certain topics. While the information is important, it is also just one source out of many that help inform our decisions. As expected, there were a wide variety of opinions expressed. Seventy five percent of the people responding to the survey own waterfront. Although there are variations in how the shoreline owners answered compared to the non-owners, there are some clear messages. For example, two thirds of the people thought that 4 to 6' is wide enough for a single residential dock. Also, as supported by other studies, water quality, quality of fishing, and natural appearance of the lake or river and its shoreline is an important part of people's boating experience.

Since we're on a schedule to have the rules done by January 2010, several things are happening simultaneously. An early, draft copy of the rules was sent to the State Revisor's Office to ensure that our product is in the correct format. Also at this time we are considering all of the comments we've received so far, and continuing to draft language that protects Minnesota's public waters, and allows reasonable use of the public resource.

In addition to the rule drafting, we are working quite a bit on the Statement of Need and Reasonableness (SONAR). This is a required companion document to the rules that explains the needs for specific changes being made to the rules, and why those changes are reasonable. Much of what we learn from our Advisory Group and other research helps ensure that the rules we will propose are reasonable.

Hearings for the structure rules have not been scheduled, but are expected to be held in late summer or early fall.

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