Management of Small Docks and Piers

Best Management Practices
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A Basic Legal Premise:

• Docks are private structures occupying public waters.
• Riparian rights mandate access, not structures.
• Therefore, docks are a privilege, not a right.
• As such, they can be regulated to protect public interests.
• Avoid
• Minimize
• Mitigate
Managing Shading Impacts:
Avoid Resource Areas or Minimize Area Affected

Graphic courtesy Dave Burdick, Univ. New Hampshire
Maximize height and minimize width ...

... 1 foot high or more for each foot wide
Orient North-South, or as close as possible.
Avoid Roofs or Walled Structures
Explore Techniques to Increase Light Transmission

Fiberglass Grating
Installing grating panels
Light Prism

Space Between Decking
Managing Construction Impacts

Keep off the Marsh.
Where possible work from a barge or work out along the pier.
Sharpen ends of piles

When possible use low pressure jetting to start and drop hammer to drive the piles.
Impacts from Boats and Floats

Don’t Store Boats on the Marsh

Keep Floats off the Bottom at Low Tide
Managing Impacts from Contaminants

Prohibit the use of Oil-based Preservatives (Creosote or Pentachlorophenols) For Small Docks
Minimize use of CCA-treated Materials in Low Flushing Waters
Don’t Use CCA-treated Materials in Fresh Water
Alternatives include:

- Untreated Wood
- Polyethylene Pile Encasement Systems
- Metal
- Concrete
- PVC
- Recycled plastics and composite materials for decking
Decking and other elements not immersed do not need to be treated or could be made of “alternative” materials.
Managing Impacts from Dock Flotation Materials

- Require encapsulated materials
- Avoid exposed open cell polystyrene
- Avoid reuse of industrial drums
Encapsulated Floatation

In this case, expanded polystyrene foam enclosed in plastic
• Avoid painting or staining docks, piers and walkways while in the water.

• Avoid soaps when cleaning. Wash and rinse with sea water or lake water.
Require regular maintenance and upkeep of docks
Managing Impacts from Fuel Leakage

- Avoid fuel pumps or storage on docks
- Fuel outboard motors onshore when feasible
- Provide educational materials to dock owners
Managing Impacts from Boat Usage:

- Establish no-wake zones—and enforce them
- Provide educational materials to dock owners
Managing Impacts to Sediments
Suggested BMPS regarding sediments

• Adequate space between pilings
• Avoid solid fill structures
• Install pilings with minimum disruption of sediments
• Avoid floats or boats resting on the bottom
Managing Impacts to Navigation

- Structures should be water-dependent
- Reasonable leasing fees for mitigation
Managing Impacts to Navigation

- Establish setbacks from navigation areas and between docks
- Limit dock length in congested areas
- Avoid public use areas
Mean High Water
Mean Low Water

Property Line

Min. 25'

Min. 25'

Maximum 20–25 %

Establish Length
And Set-back Standards

Not to scale
Managing Impacts to Navigation

Maintain Sight lines
Managing Impacts to Public Access
Along the Shoreline
Managing Impacts to Public Access
Along the Shoreline

• Ensure passage through, over or around docks
Managing Visual Impacts
Managing Visual Impacts

- Define community standards
- Use planning process to identify impacts and define management practices
- Standards define dock dimensions, materials, color, lighting
- Management by geographic area more predictable