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## Deep Creek Lake Boating and Commercial Use Carrying Capacity Study

Although the final report, Deep Creek Lake Boating and Commercial Use Carrying Capacity Study has been published and is available at <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/deepcreeklake.html>, we understand that the DNR has asked their consultant, ERM, to explain the treatment of moored boats in their aerial survey boat counts. Until this issue is resolved, the actual number of boats that define lake capacity is questionable. (Aerial surveys were conducted in the early afternoon on holidays and weekends in July and August. ERM reported that about 9% of the boats on the lake were PWC. Of course, lake regulations stipulate that PWC are banned from Deep Creek Lake during those times and the issue of enforcement needs to be clarified by the DNR police.)

ERM provided three pages of recommendations in the final report. Although, the POA is interested in lake erosion, noise pollution, and safety they were deemed beyond the scope of the study. Therefore, there are no real recommendations in these areas other than noting the concerns and stating that further study needs to be conducted.

The recommendations that are dependent on the actual number of boats that define lake capacity should be used with caution. This is very important, as the numerical lake capacity is the trigger point for taking remedial actions.

The following are the recommendations that we believe are the most interesting to the POA community. We will report them without using a specific lake capacity number until the moored boats issue is resolved.

If the number of boats on the lake exceeds capacity more than twice in a summer, ERM recommended that the DNR consider taking remedial action to hold the level of boats at lake capacity. Among these actions are the following:

1. Place restrictions on water skiing similar to those that exist for PWC. That means no water skiing between 11 AM and 4 PM on holidays and weekends.
2. Restrict boat launches at the State Park and stop the rental of boats by the commercial marinas. As boats come in from the lake they could be replaced on a one-for-one basis.

ERM noted that lakefront owners seem to self regulate and do not venture out on the lake when the density of boats is high.

Other ERM recommendations include:

1. Provide increased law enforcement on days when lake carrying capacity may be exceeded, especially in bottleneck areas near the bridges and Turkey Neck, to insure a safe and enjoyable boating experience.
2. Strictly enforce the Maryland Boaters Safety Education Act requirements more, to insure that boat operators possess a valid certificate of boating safety.
3. Consider prohibiting special boating events during peak use hours on holiday weekends, especially in the more crowded northern and central lake zones.
4. Do not expand the Deep Creek Lake Boat Launch parking area.

5. Consider providing a small car top boat put-in for canoes and kayaks on one of the coves in the northern or southern lake zones.
6. Limit commercial uses adjacent to or on Deep Creek Lake to those consistent with a rural outdoor recreational experience.

Many lake residents were present when the final study was briefed to the Policy and Review Board on June 26, 2004. The general consensus of these people was that although, on average, lake capacity was not often exceeded, there were many hot spots on the lake that were routinely over capacity. These include McHenry cove and some of the smaller, popular coves on the lake. The method used to calculate capacity also received a great deal of discussion with many in the audience voicing concerns about its accuracy.

It is not clear how the DNR would be able to accurately count boats using the lake, and thus determine if corrective action should be taken.

In the Spring issue of the *Dispatch*, we promised to determine the source of the data used by Warren and Rea, which was the basis for the number of acres of water surface required for various types of water craft. We'll try to have that information for the Fall *Dispatch*.

## **A Garrett County Recreation Center**

Garrett College has plans to build a recreation/community center on Marsh Mountain. The center would be built on 4.7 acres donated by DC Development. The college hopes to have the facility open by 2009. The center would be built with a combination of State and local money. Garrett College wants the facility to open debt free. The college would be financially responsible for operating the facility. There would be a tiered system of fees. County residents would pay the lowest, part time residents a little more, and casual visitors the highest user fees.

Plans for the facility include a six-lane competition pool, spa, sauna, steam room, racquet ball, basketball, indoor track, exercise room, warm-water therapy pool, weight training, outdoor ice rink, and gym with seating capacity for 2,500.

Located nearby will be the proposed Adventure Sports Center International (ASCI), which will in-

clude a recirculating whitewater course with amphitheater, and a whitewater hall of fame. ASCI is a separate organization from the college. Lighted cross country ski trails with snow making are among the many adventure sports facilities planned for this complex.

## **PWC Safety**

Back in May, a PWC ran up onto a dock injuring a sunbather. The operator was charged with operating a PWC in excess of 6 knots within 100 feet of the shoreline or dock. This regulation is often violated at DCL. The charge can carry a fine of \$500. If you have trouble judging the distance, it is 33 yards, about 30 meters, or about five times the length of a typical DCL power boat. Operators need to be careful. Watch where you are going!

## **Northern Rescue Squad Moving to McHenry Area**

Although the Northern Garrett County Rescue Squad will continue to maintain stations at Friendsville and Grantsville, the Accident group is in the process of moving to McHenry. Owners of the Wisp and Deep Creek Mountain Resort have given a location and basic utilities. The majority of 9-1-1 calls come from Oakland and McHenry. The McHenry area will most likely continue rapid growth, and the rescue squad wants to be able to provide service.

## **Lake Water**

Currently the Wisp is permitted to withdraw 189,000,000 gallons of water from October through March from DCL for snow making. Depending on the lake level this lowers DCL about 1.55 inches. The Rule Bands specify the lake level for each month. Therefore, during each winter month the lake level should still be within those prescribed levels. Another way to look at the use of water for snow making is that the water goes through snow making machines at the Wisp rather than turbines at the dam. The 189,000,000 gallons "costs" Reliant Energy, the power plant operator about 10 hours of generating time. On the other hand a large portion of that snow melts and flows

back into DCL. (Visit [www.deepcreekhydro.com](http://www.deepcreekhydro.com) for actual lake levels and a graph showing required lake level by month.) The Wisp has requested an additional 100,000,000 gallons. The big difference is that almost 40,000,000 of the new request for ASCI white water course would be removed during April through September. This equates to about 1/3 of an inch of lake level, although it might be closer to 1/2 inch depending on actual lake level at the time of withdrawal. For example, if the lake is at 2461 elevation the lake surface area is larger than if the level is 2458. Thus, a given volume of water lowers the lake more in Sept. than in June.

It is not known at this time if MDE has granted the request.

## **A Tragedy Revisited**

Back in July of 2001 a boater was electrocuted when a sailboat in which he was a passenger came in contact with a 7,200 volt electric line. The Maryland Public Service Commission ruled that the power company was not responsible since the area was shallow and not suited for boating.

We note that Allegheny Power has relocated the line.

## **Biking**

At the June POA meeting, Steve Green of High Mountain Sports presented bike trail plans for Garrett County. The first trail planned is to connect the Wisp area with the DCL State Park. Other possibilities included a trail from the DCL area to Grantsville, a trail along the Yough River, and one or more connections to the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP). This trail is now open from Meyersdale, PA to McKeesport, PA, a distance of 100 miles. The sections from Meyersdale to the PA state line (aka Mason-Dixon Line) and from Frostburg, MD to the State line are now under construction and should be open by next year.

## **Sewers**

As we surmised in the Spring *Dispatch*, The Deep Creek Sanitary Service Area was expanded to include Shingle Camp Rd., Sandy Shores Rd., Sandy Beach, Pennelacres, and most of Stockslager Rd. Individual property owners have been notified and

have the opportunity to sign up and pay the capacity fee of \$6,500 for homes with up to 3.5 baths. Larger homes with more baths pay more as we reported in the Spring issue of the *Dispatch*.

It is anticipated that by the end of summer, owners of multiple lots (aka developers) in those areas will be able to purchase ERUs at the same price for their needs.

The ad valorem tax which we discussed in the Spring *Dispatch* is dead until 2006. Adoption of that tax would have resulted in DCL property owners paying most of the sewer expansion costs for most of Garrett County. In fact the County and the Public Utilities Commission are studying other methods to pay for providing sewers to most of DCL. Should the ad valorem tax, as proposed this spring, reappear in 2006, the POA will most likely take aggressive action. We would anticipate support from the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce in that effort.

In the next five years, most of the sewer work will be in areas North of the Glendale bridge and expansion of the Mayhew Inn Rd. Treatment facility. Work in the Southern areas, Blakeslee, Sky Valley, Turkey Neck, Hazelhurst, and Green Glade would begin in 2010.

## **Membership**

The next membership meeting is Saturday, August 21 8:30 AM at the Garrett Eight Cinemas. Please plan to attend.

The latest membership information shows that we have 1,254 paid members. There are 289 of our members who have indicated that they are full time residents of Garrett County.

## **Rental Units at DCL**

Some long time DCL residents and property owners have complained about a proliferation of rental properties. A recent tabulation summarizing data provided by the three main rental companies shows that in 1998 there were 525 rental properties in the DCL area, including lakefront, lake access and condos. By 2004 that number had grown to 669, an increase of 27%. This is similar to the increase in housing units in the DCL area. However, rental properties tend to be concentrated in certain lake

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