

BOATHOUSES

(fact sheet #22 of the Shoreland Management and Lake Classification Series)

ISSUE:

Definition: A “boathouse” is a permanent structure used for the storage of watercraft and associated materials and includes all structures which are totally enclosed, have roofs or walls or any combination of these structural parts (Wis. Admin. Code § NR 115.03(1)). A “wet boathouse” is a boathouse which extends over the water (beyond the ordinary high water mark) (Wis. Stats. § 30.121.)



For a Better Idea, see other side.

Boathouses located within the setback and right next to the shoreline have the potential to:

- ❖ **Fragment and disturb near shore habitat.**
- ❖ **Increase the levels of runoff pollution by increasing degree of impervious surface area.**
- ❖ **Interfere with natural shoreline beauty.**

MINIMUM STATE STANDARD:

State law exempts boathouses from the 75 foot setback requirement which applies to other buildings and structures and allows boathouses to be built on the immediate shoreline (Wis. Admin. Code § NR 115.05(3)(b)). Use of a boathouse for human habitation is prohibited and the construction or placement of a boathouse below the ordinary high water mark (“wet boathouses”) after December 16, 1979 is prohibited by state law. State law limits repair and maintenance of existing wet boathouses to 50% of the equalized assessed value of the boathouse. If a wet boathouse is damaged after Jan. 1, 1984 by violent wind, vandalism or fire, the 50% rule noted above does not apply (Wis. Stats. § 30.121).

OPTIONS:

There is an opportunity to manage boathouses here with an eye towards protecting water quality and natural shoreline beauty. Here are a few suggestions:

- ❖ Prohibit boathouses on certain classes of lakes or on all waters within the county.
- ❖ Treat boathouses like other structures and require them to be set back from the ordinary high water mark.
- ❖ Impose limits on the size and number of boathouses on each lot.
- ❖ Impose other design/dimensional standards on boathouses (see table on other side for additional ideas.)

EXAMPLE:

With a lake classification project, a county may impose different standards on boathouses within different waterway classes. The table below presents a list of standards (along the left) and hypothetical lake classes (along the top) of the table. A county may then select the standards it wishes to impose within different categories of lakes.

Boathouse Standards			
Issue	Class 1 (most protected)	Class 2	Class 3 (least protected)
Prohibition	x	permitted	permitted
Choose between boathouse, boat shelter and boat lift		x	x
Max width (measured parallel to shore)		14 ft.	14 ft.
Max height		12 ft.	12 ft.
Maximum size		200 sq. ft.	200 sq. ft.
Shoreline setback (from OHWM)		Minimum: 5 ft. Maximum: 20 ft	Minimum: 5 ft. Maximum: 20 ft.
Side yard (same as accessory structures)		x	x
Locate within view corridor		x	x
Max slope prohibition		20%	20%
Building materials blend with shoreline		x	x
Roof slope		> 4:10 and < 6:12 rise to run	> 4:10 and < 6:12 rise to run
No construction which is not essential to exclusive use of watercraft storage (no decks, living quarters, etc.)		x	x

To learn about the value of a shoreline buffer for resource protection and wildlife habitat, see fact sheet #4.

For examples of ordinances with revised boathouse standards and other proposed language, contact:

Langlade County: Becky Frisch (Zoning Administrator) (715/627-6206)

Washburn County: Craig Conroy (Zoning Administrator) (715/468-2666)

Drafted by Tamara Dudiak, UWEX-Lake Specialist (715/346-4744) tdudiak@uwsp.edu; Select ideas from Mike Dresen.



For more information, contact your regional Department of Natural Resources lake coordinator, the Wisconsin Association of Lakes [800/542-5253] or UWEX/UW-Stevens Point [715/346-2116].