

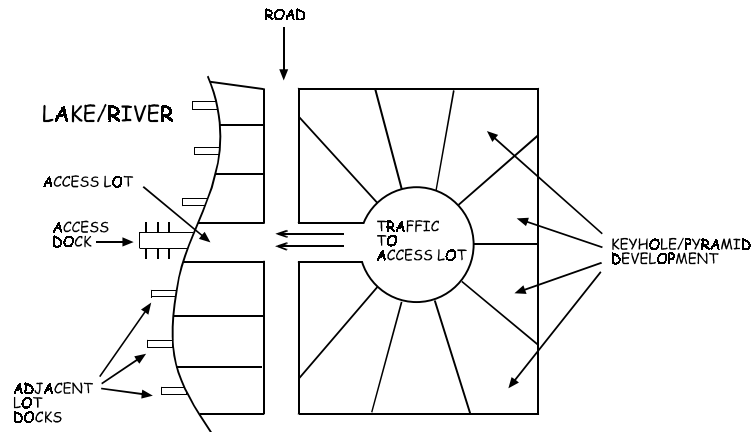
# THE KEY TO LAKE PROTECTION

## ACCESS THROUGH A KEYHOLE: MANAGING PYRAMID DEVELOPMENT

(fact sheet #14 of the Shoreland Management and Lake Classification Series)

### ISSUE:

**Definition:** Keyhole development occurs when one shoreline lot serves as an access point for several “backlots” (“backlots” do not abut the water).



If not properly managed, a subdivision development in which several lots have access to the water through a lot abutting the water has the potential to:

- ❖ Adversely affect the natural beauty of an area by accommodating higher boat and vehicle traffic and clearing the area of shoreline vegetation.
- ❖ Have a detrimental effect on the ecology of the near shore zone by increasing boating traffic within the lake system.
- ❖ Increase user conflicts and overcrowding.
- ❖ Increase the amount of polluted runoff entering the waterway.

### OPTIONS:

Several counties have experimented with different strategies to manage keyhole development. The following are a few principal strategies:

#### 1. Prohibited or conditional use:

Waupaca County requires shoreline frontage equivalent to the minimum lot width in the district for each house or dwelling unit having access.

Waukesha County prohibits pyramid developments except as may be permitted under the terms of a conditional use permit.

An amendment to the county zoning ordinance in Green Lake County now requires that shore access lots for new pyramids be zoned "recreational." Such a request requires a public hearing and approval by the county board, thus giving additional oversight to the rezoning process.

#### 2. Minimum water frontage and area:

##### ❖ For waterfront access lots:

Require that each access lot at least meet the dimensional standards of other lots within the district. More shoreline frontage might be necessary if a particular lake management class requires greater protection. Also, at

least 100 feet of frontage may be required for each additional dwelling unit having access.

Require that the access lot be at least 20,000 square feet in area or greater if a particular management class mandates stricter standards.

Set limits for how many houses may use one access lot. Sawyer county sets a maximum of four residential lots to be served by one access lot.

❖ **Per backlot dwelling unit:**

Impose greater minimum lot sizes on off water lots, ranging from 2-5 acres.

**3. Design standards for water access lots:**

❖ **These standards could address expanded buffers, piers and moorings, noise limits, screening, parking controls, land storage of boats, prohibited uses and hours of use.**

Sawyer County requires a 25 foot vegetative buffer along the side lot lines of the access lot.

EXAMPLE: For counties engaged in a lake classification project, pyramid development standards may vary with lake class.

Issue	Class 1 (most protected)	Class 2	Class 3 (least protected)	Rivers/streams
Shoreline frontage (minimum)	400 ft.	300 ft.	250 ft.	250 ft.
Access lot area (minimum)	5 acres	80,000 sq. ft	20,000 sq. ft.	80,000 sq. ft.
No. of lots with access	2	4	4	4

**To learn about the value of planned development for resource protection, natural beauty and wildlife habitat, see fact sheet #12.**

**References and Other Sources of Assistance:**

Standing, B.H., Bernthal, T.W. and Jones, S.A. 1997. Shoreland Zoning Resource Guide: An Annotated Model Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Madison.

**For examples of ordinances that have adopted standards relating to backlot development, contact:**

Waukesha County: Richard Mace (zoning administrator) (414-548-7814)

Waupaca County: David Rosenfeldt (zoning administrator) (715-258-6255)

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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].