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Pictures from Wisconsin's Rustic Roads

Toni Herker

Wisconsin DNR, Bureau of Watershed Management

PO Box 7921

Madison WI 53707

August 31, 2007

Subject: Support for 2007 Draft of NR115

Dear Toni,

Citizens for a Scenic Wisconsin agrees in general with the revised shoreland rules in the 2007 Draft of Natural Resources Chapter 115 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.

The provisions we consider most important in the 2007 Draft are: emphasis on maintaining the 35-foot primary buffer with natural vegetation, enforcement of the 75-foot set-back for buildings such as houses, and the limit of 35 feet on the height of buildings.

Other provisions that we believe are very worthwhile include: minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet, the limits on the size of the viewing/access corridor, allowing boathouses (up to 250 sq. ft.), and a limit on impervious surfaces equal to 20% of the lot area.

Also worthwhile is allowing unlimited repair and maintenance of "non-conforming" buildings. These measures give owners freedom to make their houses comfortable and reduce administrative hassles. We believe that it is important to do mitigation to the shoreline, such as augmenting the vegetation in the primary buffer as called for in the Draft, when permission to repair and/or maintain is granted.

We believe that the rules for controlling storm-water run-off (details and examples were not available at the public hearings) need to be made as simple as possible. There is a perception among local municipal administrators that the requirements are too complicated. Requiring infiltration of potential run-off water by devices such as rain gardens can be trouble. Maintenance of a rain garden to make sure it is effective could be a hassle for the property owner and a nightmare for the inspector/administrator. A rain garden is an added cost to a new house, and a disturbance to the natural state of the secondary buffer. Maybe the 20% limit on impervious surfaces by itself is all that is practical to limit run-off.

The DNR will need to do a better job of convincing administrators and politicians of the need to control run-off. Many don't see how clean water running off a roof into the lake is a problem.

We don't perceive that these rules are excessively complicated and they should not be unreasonably expensive for local administrators. Proper evaluation of administrative costs takes into account the benefits of good stewardship of the lakes.

We believe that good stewardship of our lakes and shorelands will pay off in quality of life in Wisconsin. We believe that shoreland property owners, the public that uses the lakes for recreation, and businesses such as real estate and builders all benefit from good stewardship.

Sincerely,

Chuck Mitchell, Director

07 NR115 Position Statement 083107