

***IDNR Boat Dock Registration***  
Concept Paper  
Presented to IOWAccess Advisory Council  
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Project Points-of-Contact:

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Goal:

The vision is to develop a web enabled system for ease of use by the customer to allow online application for the various classes of registrations eliminating many of the manual processes and mass mailings.

Project Purpose:

To allow Class I, II, III and IV boat dock registrations in accordance with Administrative rules. Class I and II registrations are free of charge if they meet the requirements for hoists. However, all other classes require a registration fee and hoist fees are applicable.

The system needs to ensure that requirements for registration by dock owners are met in an automated fashion that prevents as many errors and duplication as possible. Diagrams outlining boat dock size are required to be submitted to the department.

In addition, an approval and escalation work flow must be implemented because conservation officers are required to make a site visit to the docks prior to approving the application for registration. District supervisor approval is required for Class III applications and if the applications are rejected, there is an appeal process. This process must be documented and tracked.

Finally, it is the responsibility of the entity owning or managing the dock to display the boat dock permit at the dock in a prescribed fashion. The DNR wants to investigate the feasibility of allowing the printing of the registration from the owner's own PC. However, rule does prescribe that the registration is now posted by the dock owner. In the future, the department will be exploring the use of bar code scanners to read the dock permit information.

Background:

The Natural Resource Commission (NRC) made a decision that the DNR needed greater authority to regulate dock registration. It was determined that all docks are to be registered and rules have been adopted prescribing the requirements.

Permits are required for docks on all water bodies open to the public for boating or other recreational uses. The Conservation and Recreation division governs permits for all types of docks.

Classes of permits are designated as follows:

1. "Class I" permits authorize "standard" private docks, other private docks in specified areas, and docks permitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
2. "Class II" permits authorize docks that are managed by a city or county and extend from shoreline property owned by the city or county;
3. "Class III" permits authorize "nonstandard" private docks;
4. "Class IV" permits authorize commercial docks. A dock that involves placement of fill or construction of a permanent structure in a state-owned public water body also requires a construction permit issued under 571 Chapter 13.
5. Dock management areas is an area designated by the department in the bed of a water body adjoining a state park, wildlife management area, or recreation area or adjoining a strip of land that was dedicated to the public and is subject to the jurisdiction of the department pursuant to Iowa Code section 461A.11, second unnumbered paragraph.

The owner of a standard dock shall have until July 1, 2008 to apply for a Class I dock permit on an application form supplied by the Department. The applicant shall certify that the dock meets the criteria for a Class I permit and the department shall assign a permit number, which may be a series of numbers or letters, or a combination of numbers and letters. Class I dock permits may be issued for terms up to five years without a fee.

Class II permits shall include exceptions as needed to provide continuing authorization for docks and hoists that were lawfully installed and maintained before the effective date of certain requirements set forth in rule. Certain requirements are in place for the extension of docks from the water's edge. Class II dock permits shall be issued without fee for a term up to five years.

Class III and IV permits require the payment of a fee and must meet more stringent requirements as outlined in rule. Exceptions are allowed according to rule. The requirement for posting the registration is somewhat different than that of Class I and II registrations.

The applicant for a Class II, III or IV permit is required to submit to the department a completed application on the applicable DNR dock permit application form.

If the applicant for a Class III or IV permit is not the owner of the shoreline property from which the dock extends, the applicant shall identify the contractual relationship between the applicant and each property owner and shall submit as part of the application the written consent from each owner.

The application form shall be accompanied by accurate plans and drawings as specified on the form. The drawings shall accurately show the size and location of each boat hoist, slip, platform, catwalk, buoy, or other structure to be maintained in front of the shoreline property. Docks in front of non adjoining shoreline properties on the same water body owned by the same person or legal entity may be included in one application.

An application for renewal of a permit for an existing dock and hoists must specifically describe each requested modification. The applicant shall submit an administrative fee with the application. The completed application form and payment shall be submitted to the department's district law enforcement office in the district where the proposed dock is located. The application will be assigned to a conservation officer to investigate.

Request:

Development of a Boat Dock Registration application submission system with edits to reduce or eliminate error and duplication. Requirements outlined in the Project Purpose and Background Section above must be met.

The system should eventually allow notification of customers when it is time to renew their registrations. Preferably the notification will be computer generated to reduce manual effort. The system should also provide notification of law enforcement officers in the appropriate district office, when an investigation is required for approval of the application for registration.

Although there is a paper trail of history as to previous registrations, the plan is to start fresh with new registrations so their will be no conversion requirements. The current process is to track all bodies of water requiring extra work to maintain. The preference would be to track only bodies of water for the exceptions or requirements of certain permits as outlined in rule. A new registration numbering system will be used.

A mechanism to enable web diagrams and paper submission of the diagrams would be great, but is not required initially.

It is important to get a system implemented for use by July 1 of 2007. A more simplified approach may be necessary initially to accomplish this. The system must be designed so that it can be easily modified for additional enhancements in the future.

It may be necessary to exchange of information to our Electronic Licensing System (ELSI). In addition, the DNR is interested in investigating the feasibility of allowing credit card payment of fees for registrations and their subsequent renewals.

Flexibility must be built into this system to expand to allow Dock Management Area permits in the future according to establish rule. A phased approach will be considered to implementation.

#### Cost Avoidance:

Registration for all docks, rather than by exception, will add to the workload of existing DNR Conservation and Recreation staff in counties and district offices. In addition to the expense for resources to process the applications, there will be an increase in paper handling costs if the system is not automated. No additional funding has been established to staff this process, nor was money allocated to fund application development.

The printing and distribution of paper forms for the application process will be an additional expense. The public and DNR can benefit from an automated method of submission and tracking of their applications. Taxpayer dollars will be saved if the DNR is not required to do mass mailings to registrants.

Once the database is fully implemented, it is estimated that money could be saved annually when paper documents are eliminated or reduced. Savings can be realized from reduced telephone calls and problems encountered by the district office staff in the processing of applications and administration of registrations because of errors or not having the database information available. Automated notification to the law enforcement officers for investigations will enable more timely response in the application process. Automated notification of the District Supervisors will assist supervisors with their performance monitoring, staffing requirements and workload balancing, in addition to enabling more timely response to registration approval. Posting of registrations on all docks will enable the conservation officers greater authority in managing docks. Automation is intended to reduce the costs.

#### Project Funds:

The DNR is requesting \$20,000 in IOWAccess funding for Phase I Planning. It is likely that the DNR will request IOWAccess funds for the Design Phase II and Phase III, Implementation.

#### Interested Parties: Parties interested in this project include the following:

Dock and property owners, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Cities and Counties, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), DNR Conservation and Recreation staff, Natural Resource Commission (NRC) and the public.

#### Some of the Recipients of this Service:

Dock and property owners, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Cities and Counties, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), DNR Conservation and Recreation staff, Natural Resource Commission (NRC) and the public.