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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Concentrations of CCA Wood TreatmentsRecommended for Various Uses | |
| Retentions *(lbs./cu.ft.)* | Uses/Exposures |
| 0.10 – 0.25  0.21 – 0.41  0.31– 0.61  2.50 | Above ground  Soil & Freshwater use  Permanent Wood Foundation  Saltwater use |

# *Pumping of sediments from floats or docks resting on or near the bottom—*

Observational evidence indicates that changes in sediments occur when floats or boats are allowed to settle on the bottom at low tide (Ziencina, 2002, pers. com.). As the floats rise they create a suction that resuspends sediments—the sediment is “pumped” into resuspension. Additionally wave refraction in a downward direction may also resuspend some sediments (Ludwig, 2003, pers. com.).

**Impacts from Boating Uses Associated with Small Docks—**

Most small docks are associated with boat traffic. Being situated at the interface between land and water, at least a portion of each dock is in the intertidal zone and extends into or through shallow areas. In many cases this can lead to environmental impacts. Because docks are in the shallowest areas of an embayment and are the location where refueling may take place and engines are started and stopped, impacts are apt to be particularly significant. Propeller scarring of vegetation and “prop dredging” of sediments are perhaps the most visible impacts in the shallow waters adjacent to docks.

In 1994, a workshop on the impacts of boating was held at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (Crawford *et al*., 1998). A number of potential boating-related impacts were discussed although no differentiation was made between general boating activities and those taking place in the vicinity of docks. While noting that there were adverse impacts, the presentations revealed that there were limited quantitative data available that could be used as the basis for management decisions—although it was agreed that sufficient data exist to “substantiate the inference that recreational … motor boat traffic is far from a benign influence on aquatic and marine environments.” A second symposium on the topic, “Impacts of Small Motorized Watercraft on Shallow Aquatic Systems” was held in 2000 at Rutgers University. The results of this symposium were published in Kennish (2002).

Both workshops identified several issues of concern regarding boating activity including:

Impacts to submerged aquatic vegetation,

Contamination from fuel discharges,

Erosion on shorelines, and

Resuspension of bottom sediments and turbidity.

# *Impacts on submerged vegetation—*

Boat propellers can directly damage submerged aquatic vegetation in shallow waters (Phillips, 1960; Thayer *et al.,* 1975; Zieman, 1976; Eleuteruis, 1987; Kruer, 1998; Burdick and Short, 1999); impacts that may take years to heal. *Thallasia sp.,* for example,can take four to six years to recolonize a prop scar (Kruer, 1998). Damage to the plants and their rhizome system





**Figure 3.**  Prop scarring in Waquoit Bay Massachusetts. From Crawford (2002)

often leads to both reduced wildlife habitat and destabilized sediments. Zieman (1976) reported that most propeller scarring takes place in water less that 1 meter (3.3 feet) in depth. Research in and around Corpus Christi Bay found that 39 percent of the seagrass meadows were either moderately (5–20 percent) or heavily (<20 percent) scarred based on the percentage of the area of the beds compared with the area of the propeller scars (Dunton and Schonberg, 2002).

*Contamination from fuel discharges—*

Outboard motors have long been associated with polluting of waterways. Milliken and Lee (1990) provide a good summary of the early literature. Two-cycle engines release up to 20 percent unburned fuel along with exhaust gases (Moore, 1998). Moore (1998) compared the polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH), a carcinogenic organic molecule found in petroleum products, output from a two-cycle outboard engine with that from a four-cycle engine. The tests were run in tanks containing fresh water. The two-cycle motor discharged five times as much PAH as the four-cycle engine based on levels in the tanks. Most of this difference was due to a reduction in discharge of 2- and 3-ring compounds in the four-cycle. However, he found little difference between the levels of discharge of 4- and 5-ring compounds—those generally related to chronic toxicity. Albers (2002) notes that PAH concentrations in the water column are “usually several orders of magnitude below levels that are acutely toxic,” but those in sediments may be much higher.

Even when PAHs are found in coastal waters it is difficult to relate them directly to small dock use. Sanger and Holland (2002) looked at PAH levels in tidal creeks in South Carolina but were not able to distinguish PAHs from dock-related activities from other anthropogenic sources. Additionally, it is difficult to differentiate between general recreational boat use and that associated with small docks (Sanger, in Kelty and Bliven, 2003)

*Shoreline erosion—*

Boat wakes, which lap at the shoreline, can contribute to increased shore erosion (Zabawa *et al.* 1980; Camfield *et al.* 1980; Hagerty *et al.*, 1981). Most of these relate to boats moving at or near maximum speed through waterways. If boats are moving at a speed slow enough to avoid leaving a wake, there will not be shoreline erosion. There was little found in the literature that pertained specifically to boats maneuvering near docks or landing areas

*Resuspension of bottom sediments and turbidity—*

Running a motorized boat through shallow waters produces two distinct types of wake (Crawford, 1998):

The primary wake (or bow wake) that is related to water displacement by the boat that moves out to the side and can cause bank erosion, and

The secondary wake (or prop wash) related to engine and propeller effects that moves behind the boat and down and causes sediment resuspension and damage to submerged aquatic vegetation.

The secondary wake does not fan out as does the surface wake and consequently has localized impacts. Hartge (1998) compared prop-driven boats with those that were water-jet propelled and noted no major differences between the amount of resuspension of sediments; he did note that slow-moving, heavy laden boats caused more turbidity than lighter, faster moving boats. Modern planning hulls (hulls designed to climb towards the surface of the water as power is applied, thus reducing the amount of wetted hull surface and reducing the friction or drag) also have a far lesser impact on bottom sediments (Crawford, 1998; Hartge, 1998). Secondary wake impacts are difficult to quantify accurately because they vary widely from boat to boat and based on environmental conditions. Propeller thrust characteristics are highly variable depending on:

Propeller size,

Thrust angle,

Clearance over bottom,

Engine power,

Hull shape,

Operating conditions (*e.g.,* speed, state of the tide, weather, number of passengers, and

Operator choices. (Crawford in Kelty and Bliven, 2003).

Despite the ongoing research described above, there has been limited progress in finding quantifiable, predictable impacts from boating uses. This led Crawford (in Kelty and Bliven, 2003) to offer the following conclusions.

Using sediment resuspension to assess impacts is not recommended because of the wide range of factors involved.

Small-scale measurements of wave impacts are too variable; the broader the scale the better.

It is difficult to ascribe generic impacts to an activity like boating that has such a wide range of variables.

More research is needed—however the research is expensive and very time consuming.

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