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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 |

*Impacts from Fuel Leakage—*

Fueling that takes place at small docks generally consists of pouring fuel from a portable tank into an outboard engine’s fuel tank—often with the engine attached to the stern of the boat directly over the water. This offers the opportunity for spillage or overflows. Poorly designed or maintained engines also may discharge fuel during operation. Petroleum products in marine waters can have significant impacts to be discussed further in the following section on boating impacts.

**Impacts of Small Docks on Sediments and Sedimentation—**

During a permit review or planning exercise, coastal managers sometimes hear concerns that small, pile supported docks may cause changes to sediments topography and composition in the vicinity of the structure. This may be attributed to erosion, increased sedimentation, or resuspension and movement of specific particulate sizes or types. Generally, one of the following three mechanisms are suggested:

Changes in water movement due to pilings redirecting water flow or speeding movement around the pile resulting in scour,

Disruption of sediments during piling installation,

Suspension of sediments as floats or boats attached to docks touch or approach the bottom at low tides and lift sediments as they rise with the tide (“pumping”).

# *Altering currents—*

Structures placed in moving water have the capability to disrupt the water’s flow. Piles may cause increased flow rates immediately around their base leading to scour and erosion. They may also lead to a general slowing of flow over the area of the dock, resulting in settling out of sediments carried by the current. The resulting changes in sediments caused by scour or deposition may affect fish shellfish or habitat.

There appears to be very little in the way of research results available on the impacts on sedimentation from small pile supported structures. What research has been reported was done in open ocean settings, not in embayments, and most focused on the morphological changes to adjacent shorelines and bottom topography—no information was located on the nature of sediment type change, if any, over time in the vicinity of pile-supported piers.

What literature was located was done in the 1970s. Noble (1978) assessed the impacts of 20 piers—all situated within the Southern California Bight. These piers ranged from 625–2,500 feet in length and 15–300 feet in width—far larger than the small recreational facilities under consideration here. All of the piers studied had pile spacing greater that 4 times the diameter of the piles. Noble found that these piers “had a negligible effect” on sedimentation and erosion of adjacent shorelines. He notes that his results support prior findings of Johnson (1973) and Evert and DeWall (1975).

Miller *et al.,* (1983), researching the impacts of an 1,840-foot long, 20-foot wide pier near Duck, NC on the Atlantic coast found that the pier produced a permanent trough under the pier reaching a maximum depth of 9.9 feet. Scour around individual pilings was noted to be on the order of 3.3 feet in depth. The pilings in this case are 30 and 36 inches in diameter spaced 15 feet on center across the pier and 40 feet on center along its length.

In an engineering study related to Lagoon Pond on Martha’s Vineyard, MA, Poole (1987) suggests that, “At a wind angle of 90º to a 50-foot pier with 5 pilings on each side [diameter of pilings not noted–ed.] can [sic] produce eddy currents and flow friction 2 times the diameter of the pilings—minimally. This means…a 30 percent reduction in flow. The area or parallel shoreline affected by the flow reduction would be a factor of 2 to 3 times the pier length. Properties within 100 feet to 150 feet of a 50–foot pier could be subjected to wrack algae accumulation, sand deposition and shellfish population changes.” This evaluation cites no research results and appears to be based on predictive engineering calculations.

# *Disruption during pile installation—*

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the method of piling installation can produce changes in sediment type and bottom morphology in the vicinity of a dock (Ziencina, 2002 pers. com.) Jetting of pilings (jetting uses a high pressure water pump to blow a deep hole in the bottom. The piling is set into the hole and sand packs back around the piling) tends to cause greater disruption than driving piles with a drop hammer. Jetting suspends sediments and can disrupt adjacent vegetation resulting in bare areas around pilings that are subject to scour. Shaefer (2001) found bare areas with a diameter of 35–78 inches around pilings in St. Andrew Bay, FL. Using a low pressure pump to produce a starter hole and subsequent insertion of a sharpened pile with a drop hammer in a sandy area “reduces the physical removal and disturbance” of seagrasses in the area of the piling and results in little to no sand deposition around the pilings (Shaefer, 2001)

# *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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