



Private Dock Town Hall

Jill Andrews, Chief of Coastal Management
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Private Docks are...

Structures built onto or over the marsh or tidelands; used for recreational fishing and other water dependent activities; not available to the public; do not have enclosures; do not create a navigational hazard; may be covered and screened with wainscotting not higher than three feet; may be equipped with a hoist.

--CMPA: O.C.G.A. 12-5-282(12)



Proposed Dock Rules: January 2024

Eligibility Criteria

Standards for New Docks

- Siting
- Size of dock features

Maintenance, modification or reconstruction of existing docks

General conditions

Enforcement





Public Input on Proposed Rule

2024 Public Comment Period

1 public hearing; 7 written comments total, generally supportive.

Recommendations included:

- Change (enlarge) some of the size standards
- Create variances for unique circumstances
- Require additional professional surveys
- Add conditions for species and special resource protection
- Word changes/edits for clarity and understanding

Stakeholder Committee: July '24 – Jan.'25(+)

- Consensus Report
- Minority Report



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Private Recreational Docks Rulemaking Stakeholder Committee Process

2024 – 2025

The Stakeholder Committee

- The committee members self-nominated to serve
- Representatives from local government, contractors, engineers, builders, real estate specialists, and environmental organizations
- Supported by Coastal Resources Division Staff, US Army Corps of Engineers, and scientists from the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography
- Facilitated by faculty from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government



The Stakeholder Committee

- Committee met 5 times in person
- Reviewed draft rule from CRD
- Identified areas for discussion
- Heard from experts and sought research on areas like impacts of shading and habitat fragmentation
- Created two working groups to review research
 - Impacts of docks, shading, and to consider mitigation alternatives to look at research and additional information
 - Structure size



The Stakeholder Committee – Some Recommended Changes/Additions

- A licensed general contractor shall be required to build a private recreational dock.
- Compliance with best practices to include those for the protection of manatees and other protected species is required.
- Kayaks, paddleboards, canoes, and other similar non-motorized watercraft are not eligible for boat hoists even if registered.



The Stakeholder Committee – Additional Recommendations

- Create a Dock Builders Certification Program
- Update the Application Packet to include minimum standard drawings that include best practices in dock construction
- Develop a transfer on sale of property of revocable license



The Stakeholder Committee

- Following submission of final report to CRD, the committee reconvened virtually twice for further discussion
- A minority report was submitted to CRD
 - Areas of discussion centered around size of various dock components— allowable walkway length and width – how long is too long and how wide is too wide; fixed deck size, gangway size, floating dock size.





Dock Rules: Next Steps





Dock Rules: Next Steps

Possible Rule Changes:

- General Contactor requirements
- Protected species conditions
- Select interim variances to size standards

Changes in Practice:

- Easier process to transfer Licenses
- Update application packet with sample drawings

For the Future:

- Investigating a dock builders certification program
- Investigate development of an objective and science-based variance process.





Dock Rules: Next Steps

Criteria	Current Dock Standard (SOP)	Jan 2024 Proposed Dock Rule Standard	Fall 2025	Suggestion Source
Boat Hoist(s)	Each dock may have ONE boat hoist, 16ft. x 30ft. Exceptions for multiple or larger boats considered case by case	Each dock may have ONE boat hoist, 16ft. x 30ft. Exceptions for larger/multiple vessels	Each dock may have ONE boat hoist, 16ft. x 30ft. Variances for multiple/larger motorized vessels only	Consensus Stakeholder Report
Use of Fixed Deck 2nd story	Not allowed	Allowed	Not allowed	Consensus Stakeholder Report
Fixed Deck	300 sq.ft. max	300 sq.ft. max	Increase to 400 sq.ft. max	Public Comment/Minority Report
Fixed Walkway	Length: 1,000 linear ft. max Width: 6ft. Max Total: 3,000 sq.ft. max Height: must clear all veg/max. 6ft.above veg	Length: 1,000 linear ft. max Width: 6ft. Max Total: 3,000 sq.ft. max Height: must clear all veg/max. 6ft.above veg	Length: 1,000 linear ft. Width: 6ft. Max Total: 3,000 sq.ft. Height: must clear all veg/max. 6ft.above veg. Variances to be considered	Public Comment/Minority Report
Fixed Walkway: Creek Spans	Span creeks less than 20ft., 6ft. Above	Span creeks less than 20ft., 6ft. Above	Under consideration	Public Comment/Minority Report



Dock Rules: Next Steps

Now – January 2026:

Work through Stakeholder Committee recommendations, public comments and public input (Town Hall).

Early 2026:

Present revised proposal to DNR Board.
Public meeting.
Public comment period.

Spring 2026:

Request DNR Board's adoption of Rules.



THANK YOU!

Jill Andrews
Jill.andrews@dnr.ga.gov