

DEEP CREEK

DISPATCH

Special Winter 2001 Bulletin

Newsletter of the
Property Owners' Association
of Deep Creek Lake, Incorporated

Public Meeting about Tour Boats

Since many of our members have expressed concern about the possibility of large tour boats cruising Deep Creek Lake, we are issuing an extra edition of the Dispatch to announce that there will be a special meeting on whether larger tour boats should operate on Deep Creek Lake and how they should be regulated. The meeting is scheduled for Saturday March 17, 2001 at 10 a.m. in Room 314 of the Continuing Education Building at the Garrett Community College in McHenry.

The meeting is being held by the Deep Creek Lake Policy and Review Board to receive public comment. There are eight pages of proposed requirements for such boats. Here is a summary: The maximum length would be 70 feet with a 550 cubic inch displacement engine. This requirement would be in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR). The remaining requirements in the draft proposal for management of tour boats would be subject to change every six years without public hearing. The following is a summary of those requirements. Extensive safety inspections will be required. There will be no more than three such boats on the lake. Owner/operators will bid for a six year concession from the DNR. The hours of operation would be from sunrise until 10 p.m., except that special tours (example—Fourth of July) may operate until midnight. Amplified sound may not be audible from the shore and will be limited to the interior of the boat. Exterior lighting will be limited to that required for navigation and illumination of decks or stairs required for safety. Speed will be limited to that which creates a wake that will not damage boats or property. On board toilets will have holding tanks for pump

out to the lake area sewer system or approved septic tank. Advertising will be limited to the name of the boat in letters a maximum of 24-inches high. Beer and wine may be sold if the owner has a Maryland Class E liquor license and complies with all Federal, State and local regulations. The operator must be at least 18 years of age, and meet various other requirements. If the boat is over 49 feet, there must be a total of two crew. The regulation would expire Dec. 31, 2007.

Both the POA Board of Directors and The Deep Creek Policy and Review Board believe that all the requirements should be adopted as part of COMAR. Your POA also recommended that the concession be for only three years, rather than six. The DNR does not want to include all these minimum requirements in COMAR. They feel it is inappropriate to make the parameters for the tour boat part of the regulations. However, if the parameters are only in the concession contract, they could be changed by the DNR without public input every time a new concession is issued.

One boat, which may be used, has been sitting on the ground in a McHenry Boat yard for several years. It is 63 feet long and would be used instead of or in addition to the existing 30 foot dinner cruise boat, which has operated on Deep Creek for several years.

The case being made for these tour boats is that many visitors and local residents may not be able to own or rent boats, so there is no way for them to see the beauty of Deep Creek Lake. It has been suggested that there could be less boat traffic,

since many people who rent boats might take a tour boat. Potential tour boat operators want to be able to handle a tour bus full of visitors.

Opponents express concerns over noise, shoreline erosion, safety and commercialism of the lake.

If you have any views on the desirability of these boats being permitted, you should express your views at the public meeting. Or you may submit written comments to the Deep Creek Policy and Review Board, c/o Deep Creek Recreation Area, 898 State Park Rd., Swanton, MD 21561.

Other Lake News

The regular winter edition of the Dispatch will be mailed at the end of the month. Your 2001 POA dues notice will be included.

The request for a variance to build and operate a campground along Sandflat Rd. has been withdrawn, but may be resubmitted.

Permission to conduct a high speed motor boat race on the lake has been denied. Details of these items will appear next month.

Property Owners' Association of
Deep Creek Lake, Inc.
P. O. Box 816, McHenry, MD 21541

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