

Private Dock Town Hall

Jill Andrews, Chief of Coastal Management September 4, 2025





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



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

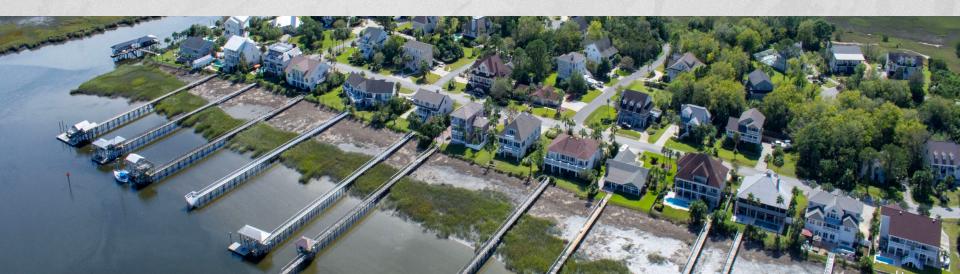


The Stakeholder Committee

- 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

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

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