

KENOSHA COUNTY WATER FRONTAGE

Fish Management Bureau

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RESTRICTED DISTRIBUTION

The enjoyment of surface waters by the general public has a strong public land requirement. Fishing, habitat for fish and game resources, and many nature study and esthetic values require wild lands, with the primary means for permanent preservation being public ownership. Public use of swimming beaches, fishing and boating opportunities also require public lands for access. An evaluation of the status of public frontage is therefore of direct interest to makers of public policy.

In past years the Department has arrived at certain conclusions relative to use of surface waters. For lakes these are: (1) that at least 25% of a lake shore ought to be wild for habitat protection; (2) all lakes should have public access proportionate with their size and characteristics; (3) that swimming beaches, viewing and esthetic opportunities have a requirement of at least 10% of the shoreline.

For streams desirable objectives are: (1) preservation of the floodplains; (2) protection of bank side habitat for game and fish; (3) preserve esthetic qualities; (4) prevent erosion of stream banks; (5) provide stream bank access for fishing on prime trout streams; (6) provide hiking and nature study opportunities. Such objectives require providing bank access on 50% of the shore for medium sized fishing rivers; and providing boat access, esthetic and scenic frontage on large rivers.

This report provides a summary of the total frontage and summarizes what proportion of the total public frontage is state and what part is local ownership.

For the potential objective on lakes of 10% public use frontage and 25% wild frontage the following status report is provided for Kenosha County.

Table 1. Frontage summary for lakes.

No. Lakes	Acre Size Class	Total Feet Frontage	Total State Frontage	Total Other Public Frontage	Percent Public Frontage
6	<20	14,520	-	-	0
4	20- 40	23,760	-	520	2.2
6	50- 99	50,160	2,083	1,040	6.2
3	100-199	55,968	-	1,300	2.3
4	200-499	85,536	8,294	3,490	13.8
1	500-999	28,512	-	370	1.3
1	>1,000*	73,920	-	17,000	23.0
Total		332,376	10,377	23,720	10.3

* Lake Michigan

Local units of government control 70% of the public frontage which is primarily used for parks and swimming beaches. It is therefore apparent that the recommended goal of 25% for wild and habitat protection frontage is an area in which public ownership is greatly needed. This is primarily a state function and as only 2% of the total lake frontage is state-owned emphasis should be given to acquire habitat frontage which consists of approximately 541 acres of remaining wetlands.

STREAMS

The public-owned frontage on small streams less than 20 feet in width is 91% of the total owned public frontage on streams. Of the total public frontage, local units have purchased 71%. An additional 31,246 feet is leased for public hunting grounds consisting of 22,914 feet along the Des Plaines River and 8,332 feet located in the Bong Area on Hoosier Creek. Palmer Creek is the only trout stream in Kenosha County and Department acquisition has preserved 33% of the stream's length.

Table 2. Frontage summary for streams.*

No. Streams	Size Class	Total Feet Frontage	Total State Frontage	Total Other Public Frontage	Percent Public Frontage
0	5- 9.9	279,840	15,568	-	5.6
3	10- 19.9	379,104	-	46,460	12.3
0	20- 49.9	-	-	-	-
0	50- 99.9	-	-	-	-
1	100-199	171,072	-	7,128	4.2
Total		1,162,856	21,814	53,588	6.4

The percentage of public purchase of streams is far below the recommended goal. However, stream drainage and channelization have subjected 33% of the total miles of stream to habitat destruction with only forage species remaining. There are, however, approximately 865 acres of adjoining wetlands remaining which top priority should be made by state and local units of government to acquire and preserve.

Table 3. Evaluation of public land control.*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Feet of Frontage</u>	<u>Feet Boat Access</u>	<u>Feet Swim Beach</u>	<u>Feet Park</u>	<u>Feet Habitat</u>
Bassett Cr.	6,246				6,246
Benedict	100	Restricted		100	
Benet/Shangrila	630	50		580	
Camp	3,837	50	X	230	3,557
Center	470	100		370	
Des Plaines Cr.	22,914				22,914 (leased)
Elizabeth	370	150		220	
Fox River	7,128			7,128	
George	260		X	260	
Hooker	2,083				2,083
Hoosier Cr.	8,332				8,332 (Bong)
L. Michigan	17,000		X	17,000	
Lilly	680	X	X	680	
Marie	790	50	X	740	
Montgomery	100			100	
Paddock	2,804			(undevel.) 200	2,604
Palmer Cr.	15,568				15,568
Pike River	46,460			46,460	X
Powers	790 (restricted)	X	266	524	
Rock	420		X	420	
Silver	<u>3,763</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>580</u>	<u>3,083</u>
TOTAL	140,745	500	266	75,592	64,387

* Stream frontage includes both banks

CONCLUSION

The influx from metropolitan areas increase the urgency to provide recreational outlets and also to prevent unwise use of existing fish and game habitat in Kenosha County.

Only 10.3% of the lake frontage is in public ownership, well below the recommended goal of 35%. The high rate of private development on lake frontage curtails the probability of reaching the recommended goal. However, only five of the twenty-six named lakes have land habitat preserved through public ownership. Priority should be stressed for public acquisition on the other lakes where fish and game habitat still exists. Boat access and swimming areas are available for the lakes which have the higher water quality and public use needs. However, many of these access sites do not have sufficient parking. Land purchase on adjacent land not fronting on the lakes should be made to provide adequate parking.

Recommended measures for public ownership on streams are high in some areas while lacking in others. Stream bank access is quite good for the only trout stream in the county. Esthetic qualities for the Pike River are rated high and will be preserved as public ownership has been secured. Only four of the nineteen named streams have public owned frontage, however. The effect of inadequate public owned frontage on streams is evident from the results of stream straightening and septic tank discharges. Remaining wetlands must be obtained to protect remaining habitat and esthetic frontage before complete destruction occurs.

The high degree of private ownership and land values make future public ownership of water frontage extremely difficult. With this high degree of land use, every effort should be exercised to enforce existing water shoreline laws and regulate county zoning restrictions until more permanent land controls can be achieved.



