

Highlights of NR 302 “Management of Wisconsin’s Wild Rivers”

Here is a short summary of requirements in Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 302:

Definitions:

- Free flowing condition: no dams or artificial structures that impede flow
- Protection zone: area of land within 400 feet of the river or to the visual horizon (whichever is greater)

Managing lands adjacent to a Wild River:

1. DNR owned or controlled land
 - Control human-caused erosion to protect the land, using natural materials matching immediate surroundings
 - Restore affected areas that were human-modified, using natural materials
 - Suppress fires
 - Develop limited walk-in access for launching watercraft
 - Leave vegetation alone within 150 feet of each bank of the river
 - Put up signs on the edge of the protection zone to aid recreational users
 - Control insect outbreaks
 - Locate primitive campsites where well-screened by vegetation or topography (no vehicular access)
 - No grading on the banks except as allowed by NR 302
 - No development (including campgrounds) adjacent to the shoreline in the protection zone; and only limited development needed for recreation from the 400-foot protection zone to ¼ mile from the banks.
2. County Forest Land – the County Forest Land Use Plan shall designate management practices to assure preservation, protection and enhancement of the Wild River.
3. Forest Cropland and Woodland Tax Law lands – management plans and recommendations must recognize the presence of wild rivers running through such lands and protect “Wild River values”.
4. Private Land: DNR provides information and land use recommendations for development on private or commercial lands adjacent to Wild Rivers.

Wild Rivers Alterations (regardless of type of ownership)

5. No new dams or structures (excepted FERC-licensed dams built before 1965)
6. No new permits for bulkhead lines, structures or deposits, except for some limited erosion control
7. No new channel changes, dredging or connecting channels, no ponds or enlargements within 400 feet of the ordinary high water mark
8. No grading or removal of topsoil on the bank in excess of 10,000 square feet (“bank” is defined in NR 341 for priority navigable waters as the area within 300 feet of the Ordinary High Water Mark, however if at 300 feet or less the slope is greater than 10%, the bank shall extend to the point that the slope becomes less than 10% for at least 50 feet).
9. Shoreline protection measures are permitted for human-induced erosion if native materials are used
10. No new bridges except for DOT public highway bridges, or others if reasonable access to a residential dwelling cannot be secured without a bridge
11. No new piers or docks can be constructed (*compliant docks installed prior to designation can be kept on the Totogatic*)
12. No natural obstructions can be removed by the Department (*obstructions can be removed as needed in the upstream-most reach of the Totogatic to protect wild rice on Totogatic Lake*)
13. The impact of utility corridors must be minimized