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☞ (FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2011-12

(session year)

Assembly

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on Natural Resources...

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
(**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
(**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

* Contents organized for archiving by: Stefanie Rose (LRB) (August 2013)

Handwritten signature of Tim Gary in cursive script.

Tim Gary
Committee Clerk

Assembly

Record of Committee Proceedings

Committee on Natural Resources

Assembly Bill 595

Relating to: a permit exemption for the placement of a pier containing a floating toilet facility in the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

By Representatives Knudson, Spanbauer and T. Larson; cosponsored by Senators Harsdorf, Galloway and Taylor.

February 20, 2012 Referred to Committee on Natural Resources.

March 7, 2012 **PUBLIC HEARING HELD**

Present: (16) Representatives Mursau, Rivard, Williams, Kleefisch, Nerison, Severson, Steineke, Tiffany, Stroebel, Litjens, Molepske Jr, Mason, Danou, Clark, Milroy and Hulsey.

Absent: (0) None.

Excused: (0) None.

Appearances For

- Dean Knudson, Madison — Representative, 30th Assembly District
- Matt Woebke, Madison — 10th Senate District

Appearances Against

- None.

Appearances for Information Only

- Lisa Lehman, Madison — Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Registrations For

- None.

Registrations Against

- None.

Registrations for Information Only

- None.

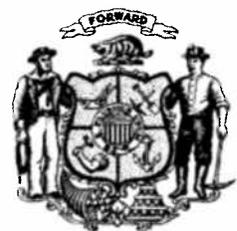
March 15, 2012 Failed to pass pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution 1.



Tim Gary
Committee Clerk



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





State Senator Sheila Harsdorf

Date: March 7, 2012

To: Assembly Committee on Natural Resources

Fr: Senator Sheila Harsdorf

Re: Assembly Bill 595 – Providing the DNR with authority to place a floating toilet facility in the St. Croix River under a permit exemption

Chair Mursau and Committee Members,

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 595 (AB 595), which seeks to provide the authority to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to allow a floating toilet facility to be placed in the St. Croix River under a permit exemption. I appreciate the opportunity to speak in favor of and outline the need for this legislation.

AB 595 has been narrowly drafted to provide a limited permit exemption for a floating toilet facility that meets technical specifications approved by the National Park Service (NPS) and is placed by the NPS along a federally owned shoreline in a federally administered area of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

As background, this issue was brought to my attention by regional DNR staff, given concerns that had been raised by the NPS and others relating to a specific island located in the St. Croix River within Wisconsin waters. This island is used by campers throughout the boating season, and human waste accumulates on the island since there are no toilet facilities on the island. This creates an unpleasant situation for campers and boaters that visit the island and environmental concerns with the impact of this waste on the island and the river.

Minnesota state law allows for the permitting of floating toilets on waterways. For your reference I have attached a picture of an example of a floating toilet, as provided by the Minnesota DNR. The National Park Service, which is responsible for the island, would like to place a similar facility as shown in the picture to provide a more sanitary and environmentally sound solution for the campers. However, since the island is located within Wisconsin's jurisdiction, this is not an option for the NPS under our state's laws.

Recognizing the impact of this situation on the riverway, the St. Croix Basin Water Resources Planning Team and the St. Croix River Association have issued their support for this proposal. The Senate companion bill to AB 595, Senate Bill 262, has been passed by the State Senate on a voice vote.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation. I welcome any questions or concerns you may have.



Thank you for giving the National Park Service the opportunity to comment on Wisconsin Senate Bill 262, An Act relating to a permit exemption for the placement of a pier containing a floating toilet facility in the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (Riverway).

We support passage of this legislation, which would allow the National Park Service to place floating toilets within the federally managed portion of the Riverway.

It is, without question, in the interest of both the federal and state governments to have these toilets seasonally provided to recreationists on the St. Croix River.

Furthermore, this legislation would assist the National Park Service in protecting the nationally significant natural and recreational resources of the Riverway, without setting precedent over any future Federal management actions.

The St. Croix River is one of the first rivers in our Nation protected by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and is a unit of your National Park System. Thank you.

Christopher E. Stein
Superintendent
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
401 North Hamilton Street, St. Croix Falls, WI 54024
(715) 483-2290



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DEAN KNUDSON

30TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Date: March 7, 2012

To: Assembly Committee on Natural Resources

Fr: Representative Dean Knudson

Re: Assembly Bill 595- Providing the DNR with authority to place a floating toilet facility in the St. Croix River under a permit exemption.

Chairman Mursau and Committee Members,

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 595, which seeks to provide an exemption to allow the National Park Service to place a floating toilet facility in the St. Croix River. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the need for this legislation with you today.

The St. Croix River forms the boundary between Wisconsin and Minnesota near the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The river has been designated as a National Wild and Scenic Riverway, a protection that is administered by the National Park Service. The actual state boundary runs along the main channel of the river, which means that numerous islands are located within Wisconsin's jurisdiction.

These islands are intensively used by boaters. On some popular islands, hundreds of people may spend some or all of the weekend. There are no toilet facilities on the most islands.

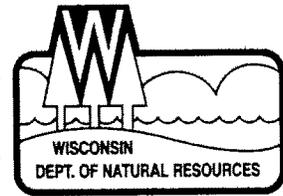
Minnesota law does allow permitting of floating toilets on waterways, an option that the National Park Service has successfully utilized. On one particular island located within Wisconsin jurisdiction, the National Park Service would like to place a toilet facility to improve sanitation and protect the water quality. An exemption from Wisconsin law is needed to allow the NPS to provide this solution.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





Testimony of the Department of Natural Resources regarding AB 595

Assembly Committee on Natural Resources

March 7, 2012

Good afternoon. My name is Liesa Lehmann, and I am the Waterways and Wetlands Section Chief for the Department of Natural Resources. Thank you for the invitation to testify for informational purposes regarding AB 595.

As you have heard, the purpose of this bill is to provide a statutory exemption from permitting to the National Park Service for a very limited purpose.

The National Park Service has asked for the state's help in addressing an environmental problem: the management of human waste associated with heavy boating traffic and recreational use on the federally managed segment of the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. This problem grows throughout the boating season on publicly-owned shoreline and islands.

The National Park Service has proposed a technical solution to this problem: floating toilets, essentially porta-potties, which will be attached to the end of piers along these federally-owned lands. These floating toilets will serve recreational boaters, and protect water quality by keeping human waste out of the land and water. The National Park Service already deploys them on the Minnesota side of the river, and wants to place one or more on the Wisconsin side. The State of Minnesota and US Army Corps of Engineers have had no concerns.

AB 595 provides a mechanism for placing a floating toilet attached to a pier, without needing a permit under Wisconsin's waterway laws. This is a unique situation, and the bill appropriately limits this exemption to piers owned and placed by the National Park Service along federally owned shoreline of the St. Croix River, and requires that the structure meet technical specifications.

Thank you again for the invitation to testify on AB 595. I'll be happy to answer any questions.

* * * *

Liesa Lehmann, Waterway and Wetlands Section Chief
Bureau of Watershed Management
(608) 264-8554



Camping

1. Open camping on islands only. Areas suitable for camping are available on a first-come, first-served basis.
2. Camping stay limit is 7 consecutive nights, and a maximum of 30 nights annually.
3. Tents must be occupied on the first night of stay. Equipment will be confiscated from campsites that are unoccupied for more than 24 hours.

Firewood

1. Firewood may not be gathered from any island. No cutting is permitted of live trees or dead standing trees. Firewood that originates from more than 25 miles away is prohibited.

Trash and Human Waste

1. Carry out your trash. Please do not bring glass containers to the Riverway. Broken glass cuts bare feet.
2. All visitors and campers must have immediate access (within 250 feet) to a toilet. Vault toilets are available on Mile Long Island and floating toilets are available at several locations.* If not using these facilities or onboard toilets, visitors must bring and use their own portable toilets on all islands and shorelines.

*See map. Location and availability subject to acceptable water levels.

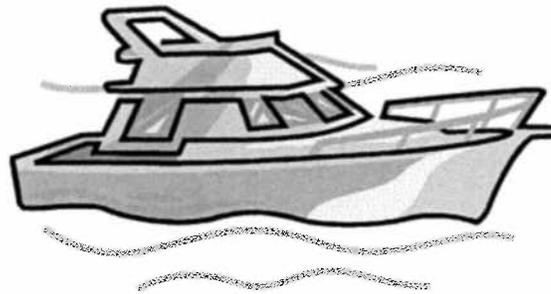
Discover clean water, lush landscapes, and quiet solitude along the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, a national park that with your help protects 255 miles of wild and scenic river corridor.



National Park Service
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway



St. Croix River Map 10: High Bridge to Boom Site Landing



For generations, St. Croix River islands have been favorite places to spend summer afternoons and weekends. All of the islands that exist in this stretch of river have been here for over fifty years, and some for over a hundred years! Yet these environments are fragile. Loss of vegetation and exposed tree roots are warning signs that an island's stability is threatened. Please help to protect the islands by limiting the wake thrown by your boat, observing length of stay limits, and respecting areas that are closed for restoration.

Regulations

The regulations on the St. Croix River between the Soo Line High Bridge and Boomsite Landing differ from those on other parts of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. This is a very popular section for houseboats, cabin cruisers, pontoons, runabouts, and fishing boats. Here are the regulations that apply to use on this stretch of river.

Boating

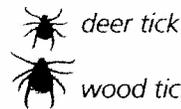
1. Slow no wake within 100 feet of all shorelines, including islands, and within 100 feet of all swimmers.
2. Slow no wake at High Bridge Bend (River Mile 28.6) and West Channel Narrows (River Mile 27 near MN shore). Buoys will be in place to mark these locations when the spring high water recedes.
3. Slow no wake whenever the Stillwater gauge reaches 683. Call (651) 290-5861 for automated gauge level readings.
4. Water skiing is prohibited after 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays.
5. Approved life jackets for each person are required on your vessel. Children under 13 are required to wear a life jacket.
6. Use of personal watercraft is prohibited north of Boomsite Landing.

Safety

1. Bring your own drinking water. Treat river water before drinking to avoid giardia, a serious stomach irritant.
2. Wear sunscreen, sunglasses, and a hat to prevent sunburn.
3. Protect your feet with river shoes, water sandals, or old shoes. Fish hooks, glass, and rocks can injure your feet.
4. Canoe and kayak users should watch out for motorboats. Paddle near the shore and head into wakes to avoid capsizing.

Safety Continued

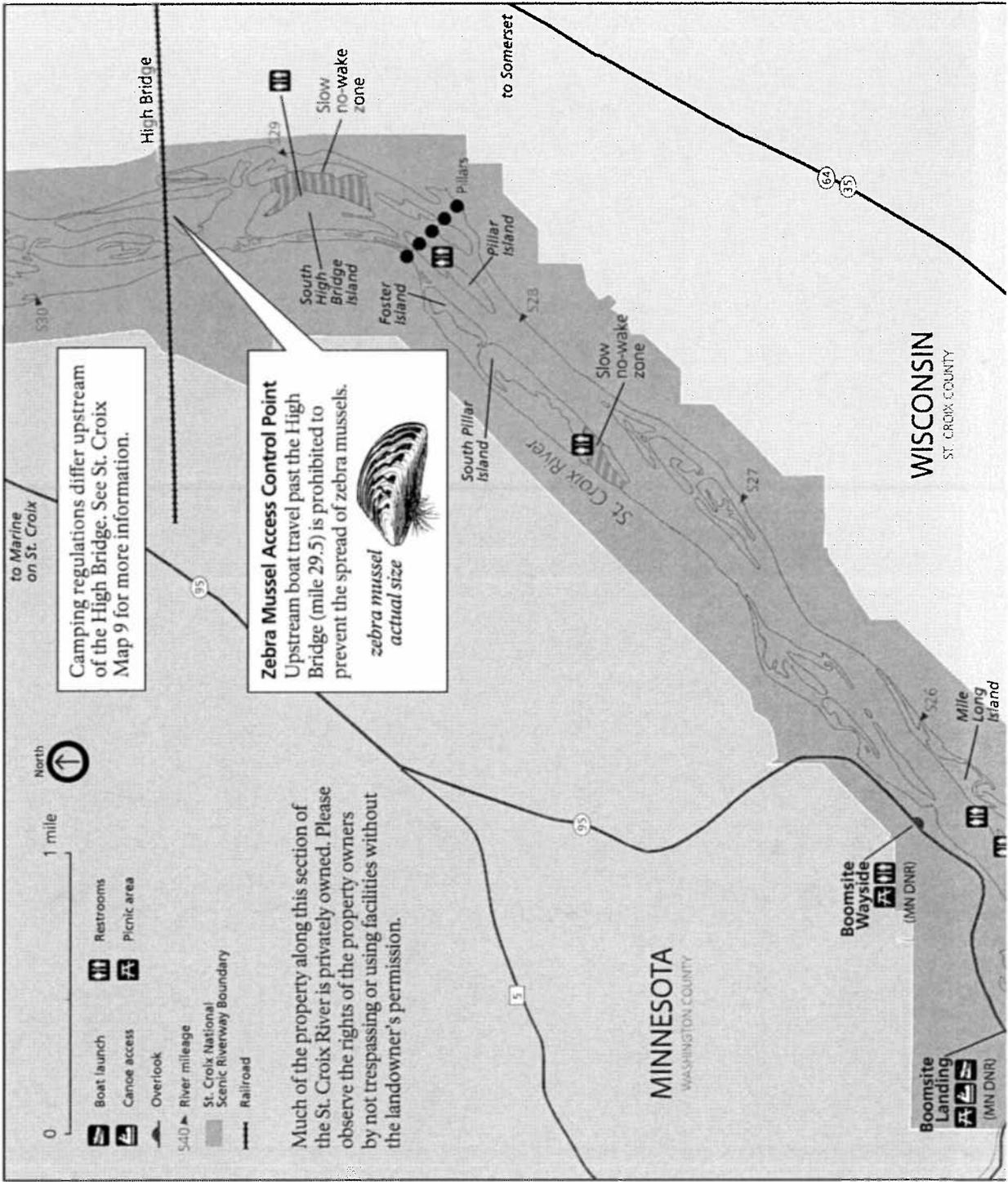
5. Blastomycosis is a fungal infection that is commonly contracted by dogs and sometimes by humans. Avoid digging in moist soils.
6. Check for ticks often and know the symptoms of Lyme disease. Deer ticks are common along the Riverway and some carry the bacteria that cause the disease.



7. Know how to identify poison ivy.

Behavior

1. Don't jump from cliffs, bridges, rope swings, or trees.
2. Use alcohol responsibly.
3. Quiet hours are 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.
4. Possession or use of fireworks is prohibited.
5. Leave freshwater mussels and mussel shells in their place. Mussels can be injured or can die from being returned to the river in the wrong position.
6. Keep off areas closed for restoration.
7. Pets must be on a leash no longer than 6 feet and under control.
8. Leave wildflowers and historical artifacts untouched. Report any artifacts to the National Park Service.



Camping regulations differ upstream of the High Bridge. See St. Croix Map 9 for more information.

Zebra Mussel Access Control Point
 Upstream boat travel past the High Bridge (mile 29.5) is prohibited to prevent the spread of zebra mussels.



zebra mussel
actual size



1 mile

- Boat launch
- Canoe access
- Overlook
- River mileage
- St. Croix National Scenic Riverway Boundary
- Railroad
- Restrooms
- Picnic area

Much of the property along this section of the St. Croix River is privately owned. Please observe the rights of the property owners by not trespassing or using facilities without the landowner's permission.

WISCONSIN
ST. CROIX COUNTY

MINNESOTA
WASHINGTON COUNTY

National Park Management Boundary
Minnesota/Wisconsin State Management Boundary

Personal Watercraft Prohibited

Use of personal watercraft is prohibited north of Boomsite Landing to the headwaters of both the St. Croix and Namekagon rivers. Jet skiers may enter the St. Croix River at Boomsite Landing, but must head down the channel formed by buoys and out of the National Park boundaries.

Boating Speed Regulations

In slow-no wake zones, motorboats are restricted to the slowest possible speed necessary to maintain steerage, but in no case greater than five miles per hour.

There is also a slow-no wake rule pertaining to any area within 100 feet of all shoreline, including islands, and within 100 feet of all swimmers.

**St. Croix River Map 10:
High Bridge to
Boomsite Landing
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway**

Contact the National Park Service
St. Croix River Visitor Center
St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin
(715) 483-2274

Website: www.nps.gov/sacn



Emergency Information

Call 911 if you need an immediate response from any location.

To report a violation:

1. On the Minnesota side of the river, contact the Washington County Sheriff: (651) 439-9381.
2. On the Wisconsin side of the river, contact the St. Croix County Sheriff: (715) 386-4701.

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