

Siting Considerations for New and Expanding Marinas

Environmental Concerns

The natural plant and animal communities of coastal areas serve diverse beneficial functions. Wetlands, for example, provide habitat for fish and fowl. They form a natural buffer against incoming storms and act as a filter contributing to the purification of stormwater runoff from the land. Wetlands also support tourism, hunting, and fishing. Wetlands, as well as other highly productive plant and animal communities such as submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) and shellfish beds are susceptible to degradation from coastal development and associated activities. It is important that coastal development not diminish the ecological, economic, recreational, and aesthetic values of these resources.




Pertinent Laws and Regulations

See “Marina Maintenance and Modification”

Site Selection Guidelines

Redevelop Existing Sites.

In order to decrease the impacts of development on fragile coastal ecosystems, new waterfront facilities should be placed in previously developed sites. Key points to remember are:

- ___  CAFRA [7:7E-1.5(b)1(ii)(viii)] encourages redevelopment of the developed waterfront as well as concentration of development for purposes of preserving open space.
- ___  CAFRA provides exemptions for certain maintenance activities but requires NJDEP approval for any new construction.
- ___  Coastal wetlands permits are required before any excavation, dredging, filling, or placement of structures can occur on coastal wetlands.

Characterize Project Site.



- ___ ✓ (1) Identify habitat types and seasonal use of the site by fish, shellfish, waterfowl, and other organisms.
- ___ ✓ (1) If necessary, retain a consultant to perform the site assessment.

(2) Total Points for BMP

Total N/A Points

Identify Rare and Endangered Species.


State and federal laws protect rare and endangered species and their habitat. Any activities in which you engage must not impact, disturb, or otherwise adversely affect species listed as rare, threatened, or endangered.

- ___  Rare and endangered species may not be disturbed (Federal Endangered Species Act, Natural Resources Article §4-2A-01 et seq., and Natural Resources Article §10-2A-01 et seq.).
- ___  CAFRA prohibits regulated development in endangered or threatened wildlife or vegetation species habitat unless it is demonstrated that the habitat would not directly or through secondary impacts be adversely affected. (N.J.A.C. 7:7E-3.38)
- ___ ✓ (1) For a preliminary screening of a project site, review the Natural Resource Inventory at your local planning office. For more precise information concerning sensitive habitat areas, submit a project description and a photocopy of a United States Geological Survey topographic quadrangle map – with the site identified – to NJDEP and USFWS.
- ___ ✓ (1) If protected species are present, implement an approved protection plan before project construction.

(2) **Total Points for BMP** **Total N/A Points**

Avoid Submerged Aquatic Vegetation.

Submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) provides habitat for shellfish and finfish as well as a food source for waterfowl. Its vigor is a good indicator of water quality.

- ___  SAV habitat is classified as a “special area” (N.J.A.C. 7:7E-3.6) and activities are prohibited in these areas except for the following:
 - Trenching for utility pipelines and cables when there are no feasible alternative alignments. Disturbed areas must be restored to preconstruction conditions.
 - New dredging of State and Federal navigation channels provided there is no feasible alternative to avoid vegetation. Mitigation is required for destruction of one or more acres of SAV.
 - New and maintenance dredging to remove accumulated sediment from previously authorized navigation and access channels to marinas, lagoons, canals, or boat moorings provided that there is no practical or feasible alternative that avoids the vegetation.
 - Dredging may be restricted on a seasonal basis if there are any of the following conditions: the waterway supports spawning or nursery areas for the endangered shortnose sturgeon, Atlantic sturgeon, alewife,

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blueback herring, winter flounder, white perch, or striped bass; the area contains contaminated sediments including bacterial contamination; and the area is within 1,000 meters or less of oyster beds, and known female blue crab winter hibernation areas.

- (5) Locate new marinas or expand existing marinas in a manner that reduces navigation over SAV beds.

(5) Total Points for BMP

Total N/A Points




Minimize Wetlands Disturbance.

-  CAFRA (N.J.A.C. 7:7E-3.27) prohibits disturbance to wetlands unless the proposed activity requires water access or is water oriented as its central purpose. Mitigation is required in cases where loss of wetlands is unavoidable at a replacement rate of at least 2:1.
-  Any proposed construction in tidal wetlands requires authorizations, licenses, or permits from the NJDEP and the USACOE.
- (1) Minimize disturbance to wetlands and indigenous vegetation in riparian areas.

(1) Total Points for BMP

Total N/A Points

Avoid Shellfish Habitat.

-  New or expanded marinas are not authorized in areas that would damage shellfish habitat (N.J.A.C. 7:7E-3.2).
-  Construction of dock or boat moorings in shellfish habitat is prohibited except for publicly owned fishing piers and in waters that are classified as prohibited for shellfish harvesting (N.J.A.C. 7:7E-3.2).
-  Shellfish stock may not be harvested from marina basins. These waters are classified as prohibited for shellfish harvesting (N.J.A.C. 7:7E-3.2).

Avoid Critical Migration, Nesting, and Spawning Periods.


- (1) Schedule construction to avoid critical migration, nesting, and spawning cycles of important finfish, shellfish, and wildlife.
- (1) Consult with NJDEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife (Appendix 1) for site-specific determinations of the potential effects of activities on wildlife populations.

(2) Total Points for BMP

Total N/A Points



Avoid Colonial Waterfowl Nesting and Staging Areas.

The preservation of historic nesting and staging areas is vital to the survival of many waterbird species. Regional waterfowl populations congregate in certain areas to breed and feed during specific times of year. New or expanded marinas must be located such that the increased boating activities associated with them not deter waterfowl from using these historic areas.

-  CAFRA discourages development that would directly or indirectly damage critical wildlife habitats recognized as historic waterfowl staging areas (N.J.A.C. 7:7E-3.39).

Avoid Geographic and Hydrographic Impediments.

Flushing is impeded at the head of tide and in areas where salinity or temperature differences produce variations in water density. Variations in density cause the water column to form distinct layers that do not readily mix.

-  Locate a new marina in an area where deep-water access can be achieved with a minimum of excavation, filling, and dredging.
-  State law promotes water circulation to ensure water quality by requiring that basin depths be no deeper than areas outside the basin. Circulation is also promoted by slip orientation and basin entrance site selection.
- (1) Orient entrance channels in the direction of the prevailing winds.
- (1) Orient slips parallel to currents.

(2) **Total Points for BMP** **Total N/A Points**

Consider Bottom Configuration.

- (1) A continuous, gradual downward slope from the berthing area into deeper water is ideal.
- (1) Avoid canals, irregular pockets, and sumps that are deeper than adjacent channels.
- (1) Avoid square corners in marina basins and dead-end channels as much as possible.
- (1) Locate slips for deep-draft vessels in naturally deep areas of the basin.

(4) **Total Points for BMP** **Total N/A Points**

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Follow Natural Channels.

- ___ ✓ (1) Align entrance channels with natural channels to promote flushing.
- ___ ✓ (1) Boat lanes should progressively widen toward the seaward end and narrow toward the inland end to allow water to flow freely and maintain its velocity within the marina.
- ___ ✓ (1) Avoid locating the entrance channel perpendicular to the natural channel to reduce the tendency for shoaling and thus, the need for future dredging.
- ___ ✓ (1) Avoid long winding channels connecting marinas to open water.
- ___ ✓ (1) Where possible, establish two openings at opposite ends of the marina to promote flow-through currents.

(5) Total Points for BMP

Total N/A Points

Chapter Total:

___ (23)

Chapter Total N/A Points:

Cumulative Total:

___ (1000)

Cumulative Total N/A Points:
