

State senator opposes additional public boat launches

By TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

Sen. Mat Dunaskiss, R-Lake Orion, is mobilizing lakerefront property owners to oppose more state-owned public boat launches.

"The Department of Natural Resources claims it uses criteria in picking sites," said Dunaskiss. "I think their policy is: If they can find land, they try to purchase it."

Dunaskiss also is eyeing a moratorium on state launch site purchases.

Michigan United Conservation Clubs is "very much opposed to that attitude," said executive director Tom Washington.

"The lakes belong to the public. They belong to the people. The fish belong to the people. Yet they'll want the state to stock their lake and maintain a fishery."

"His effort is clearly in response to his constituents who don't want the great unwashed public out there, Oakland County

is notorious for that. I've got mine' attitude. But you'll see a dock with eight, 10, 12 different boats that belong to the owner's brother, nephew and uncle," said Washington. He recalled past "racial overtones" in the 25-year-old issue.

Dunaskiss will chair a subcommittee of the Senate Natural Resources Committee to develop criteria for boat launches and put them into law. "We want to hold a

public hearing in Oakland County and another in the west part of the state," the senator said.

Subcommittee members will include Sen. David Hongman, R-West Bloomfield, who represents the western lakes districts of Oakland County, and Sen. Chris Dingell, D-Trenton, known for pro-hunter legislation.

"We want to put together some kind of weighted formula. What is the usage of a lake? How many homes are there? Is there already

public access? How deep is the lake?" Dunaskiss said.

He told of an Oakland sheriff's marine patrol boat being damaged twice when it hit stumps in a shallow lake.

DNR boat launches in Oakland County are on Middle Straits Lake, Commerce Township; Proud Lake near Wixom; Heron, Holly, Crocheted, Crystal, Hordredge and Wildwood-Valley lakes in the Holly Recreation

Aren; and Graham Lake (south) and Trout Lake, in the Bald Mountain Recreation Area.

Other boat launches are operated by the state Waterways Commission, which issues a separate entry pass; Huron-Clinton Metropolitan; and Oakland County.

To contact the subcommittee, call Dunaskiss' office in Lansing at (517) 373-2417 or in Oakland County at (810) 738-2417.

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