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RE: Draft DEP decision for Jeffrey Spinney's proposed boat ramp and pier at 126 Golden Ridge Road, Alna, Maine 04535

Dear Ms. MacNeil:

I am writing to oppose granting of this application for a new ramp and pier on this very special section of the Sheepscot River in Alna and Newcastle. I will not address here the many reasonable objections made by many other respondents based on technical dock and ramp matters or specific ecological and biological values, so very real here.

As an Alna resident who walks, skis, and paddles (by muscle power) along and on this river section, I believe strongly that you are not adequately addressing and taking into account the "existing scenic, aesthetic, recreational or navigational uses" on this river stretch, as you are mandated to do. Protection of Maine's unique and extensive riverine and shoreland areas, throughout the state, are dependent on DEP's taking protection of these values extremely seriously. The ramp and pier proposed in this application *will* certainly "unreasonably interfere with" these fragile "scenic, aesthetic, recreational, and navigational uses."

It is incorrect to say, as the draft decision does, that the Sheepscot River shorelines above Sheepscot Village and below Head Tide, or more accurately below the Dock Road bridge at Puddledock, are in any way "developed, with structures, lawns, and docks" -- of which the ramp and pier proposed in this application would be just one more. Paddling north from Sheepscot Village, once one has passed through the immediate settled area extending perhaps a quarter mile north of the bridge, the river and its shores all the way to the Dock Road bridge feel, and to a large extent are, "wild."

There are no permanent structures on or near the river banks. A power line crosses the river, and a few houses are visible, in part, upslope on the steep ridges above the river, but otherwise the shores are entirely woods or marsh. There are no "lawns" once Sheepscot Village is left behind.

This river section is completely quiet and natural. I have been able to watch eagles, deer, fisher, and mink there. As you know, the Nature Conservancy, Midcoast Conservancy, Atlantic Salmon Federation, and other organizations have devoted large amounts of time and money towards conservation and protection in this specific river area, through land and easement purchase, habitat analysis, dam restoration, and water quality monitoring. This is a *Maine, Beginning With Habitat* Area of Statewide Significance, providing habitat for Endangered, Threatened, and Rare animal and plant

species. There are public hiking trails along the river shore, on protected land, frequently used by townspeople and others desiring a quiet experience in nature, away from traffic, motors, and noise. Encouraging motorized craft on this river stretch will permanently alter this experience, so important to “quality of life” for those of us who live nearby and visitors as well.

Regarding the Golden Ridge Sportsman’s Club: my understanding is that a permanent ramp and pier would not be permitted here were the application made by the private landowner alone. Why, then, an application for a permanent ramp and pier for a perhaps 25-member Sportsman’s Club, with increased shoreland and motorized craft use, is acceptable is not clear to me. But in any case, I believe that the Golden Ridge Sportsman’s Club only came into existence after Jeffrey Spinney determined that a permanent ramp and pier would not be permitted for his personal use. It would seem justifiable to wonder about the true status of this new club, especially as I have heard Mr. Spinney state, at an Alna Planning Board meeting (of which he is the chair), that he would bear all ramp and pier costs himself alone. If this is a true, legitimate club, why wouldn’t dues or other funds from the membership be available to meet the sizable construction and installation costs?

The draft decision also exaggerates the current motorized boat usage above Sheepscot Village. I believe there is almost none, and virtually all boat use in recent decades has been muscle-powered. The amount of development here is exaggerated also.

In short, there are any number of ‘red flags’ raised by this application, and many inaccuracies in the draft decision. This ramp and pier should not be approved on “scenic, aesthetic, and recreational” grounds alone. But there are so many additional outstanding questions that rejection should be mandated also.

Please reconsider your draft decision and reject this application.

Sincerely,

Jon Luoma