

**WisDOT Division of Transportation System
Development**

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Sept. 3, 2020

Subject: Removal of Trego Landing Steps near Lakeside Road

Project ID: 1197-00-00/70

Spooner – Minong, Trego Interchange

US 53, Washburn County

Thank you for providing comment regarding the Trego landing steps located near the Lakeside Road parking area, which are proposed to be removed as a part of the subject project.

After evaluating the safety of both the travelling public and the waterway users in the area of the National Park Service (NPS) visitor center, considering public comments and completing coordination with federal oversight agencies including the NPS and the Federal Highway Administration, it has been determined that the existing landing steps will be removed as a part of the Trego interchange project.

Several of the reasons for the final decision include:

- Realignment of WIS 63 in the area of the Namekagon River Visitor Center requires the removal of the existing parking lot, which currently lies on WisDOT right of way.
- The proposed curvature of the highway does not provide adequate sight distance for a safe crossing for pedestrians at the Visitor Center. There will not be a marked crosswalk along the high-speed highway facility.
- What will remain of the existing landing area in the post-construction condition will no longer be a safe access point for users.

To maintain safety, WisDOT proposes to install fencing along the north side of the highway as part of the project. This fence will render the steps inaccessible from land. To avoid confusion for waterway users, the project will remove the landing steps and restore the area along the river.

WisDOT understands that river access is important to the many waterway users in this highly visited recreational area. There are several existing river access points relatively close to the Trego area that provide safe access to the river, but we know that improvements may be required for an ideal access point. WisDOT has been in discussions with the town of Trego and the National Park Service about potential alternatives for river access.

We appreciate your feedback and involvement in this very important project. If you have any questions, please contact WisDOT Project Manager Beth Cunningham at beth.cunningham@dot.wi.gov or (715) 635-4973.

Sincerely,

Andy Stensland

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