

“No Motor Ordinance for Eiesland Slough”

By Bonnie Huettl

Great effort has been put forth by local lake associations, water coalition groups and our own Douglas County “Protect Water Now” program to protect our beloved lakes, rivers and streams. It is prudent at this time for Douglas County Commissioners to enact a **Surface Water Use Ordinance No Motors on Eiesland Slough**.

Eiesland Slough is located entirely within the boundaries of Douglas County specifically S ½ of Section 26, Tract 128N, Range 39W of Moe Township. The Department of Natural Resources has classified this body of water as an NES Lake. This classification sets forth the greatest restriction on a lake. The definition of a NES Lake is; usually less than 150 acres total, less than 60 acres per mile of shoreline, and less than three dwellings per mile of shoreline. Such lakes may have some winter kill of fish; may have shallow, swampy shoreline and are less than 15 feet deep.” All of these are true regarding *Eiesland Slough*. It is 47-66 acres in size depending on yearly precipitation. The level of the water remains stable despite the temporary variations. The depth varies from 4 feet to 7 feet with 40% of it being 5 feet or less. There are two culverts for water flow one located at the inlet from Round Lake (id 21-197) also a NES Lake, and the other at the west side outlet to Lobster Lake (id 21-144 RDS lake). Due to the shallow nature of the lake, the entire bottom is muck and decayed organic matter. There is some sandy shore at the cattle crossing between Round and *Eiesland*. Care needs to be taken with this water as the degradation of this water affects Lobster Lake as it flows directly into it. The bay it flows into is already compromised with shallow, mucky bottom and algae blooms abundant in the summer. Any additional degraded water will greatly affect Lobster and deter the Lobster Lake Association’s, Lake Management Plan for maintaining clean water. The association has voluntarily initiated water quality testing to be monitored by the EPA to define how cleaner water can be accomplished. There is a need for a **No Motor** restriction on Eiesland. According to Dean Beck of the DNR “propeller wash of outboard motors has significant potential to physically degrade the water quality by re-suspending the accumulated sediment causing algae blooms. In my opinion, operation of motorized watercraft on Eiesland Slough can be reasonably projected to have undesirable environmental impacts regardless of boat speed or motor size”. This along with the current proposed development on 20 acres of the east shore makes this ordinance a timely decision to protect this virgin water.

On December 20, 2005, a preliminary plat was approved by DC Planning Commission for the 20 acres of the east most parcel number 45-0443-320 to be developed. “Eiesland View” will consist of 4 riparian lots. When developed, there will be a greater need to protect this sensitive water body by restricting motor use on this lake. It is important to pass this ordinance in a timely manner to ensure potential buyers of “Eiesland View”, prior to entering into an agreement to purchase, that there are restrictions in place.

The benefit of this ordinance will be to maintain Eiesland Slough in its natural, pristine, wildlife welcoming state today and for the future. Not all bodies of water can accommodate motorized watercraft and this is one of them.