

97C.001 EXPERIMENTAL WATERS.

Subdivision 1. **Definition; designation.** (a) Experimental waters are lakes and streams where special regulations are used and evaluated to meet a specific fisheries objective.

(b) The commissioner may designate any waters of the state having free access to the public as experimental waters. The designated experimental waters may not exceed 200 lakes and 50 streams at one time. For all experimental waters, the commissioner shall develop an evaluation plan and specify a termination date. On the termination date, the commissioner shall vacate or extend the experimental waters designation, or designate the experimental waters as special management waters under section 97C.005. The commissioner shall by rule establish methods and criteria for public initiation of experimental waters designation and for public participation in the evaluation of the waters designated.

(c) Designation of experimental waters under this section is not subject to chapter 14.

Subd. 2. **Public notice and meeting.** (a) Before the commissioner designates, or vacates or extends the designation of, experimental waters, a public meeting must be held in the county where the largest portion of the waters is located.

(b) At least 90 days before the public meeting and during the open angling season for fish the taking of which is, or is proposed to be, regulated under subdivision 3 on the waters under consideration, notice of the proposed designation, vacation, or extension must be posted at publicly maintained access points on the water.

(c) Before the public meeting, notice of the meeting must be published in a news release issued by the commissioner and in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the proposed experimental waters are located. The notice must be published at least once between 30 and 60 days before the meeting, and at least once between seven and 30 days before the meeting.

(d) The notices required in this subdivision must summarize the proposed action, invite public comment, and specify a deadline for the receipt of public comments. The commissioner shall mail a copy of each required notice to persons who have registered their names with the commissioner for this purpose. The commissioner shall consider any public comments received in making a final decision.

(e) If a water to be designated is a lake with a water area of more than 1,500 acres, or is a stream or river with a reach of more than six miles, a public meeting must also be held in the seven-county metropolitan area.

Subd. 3. **Seasons, limits, and other requirements.** The commissioner may, in accordance with the procedures in subdivision 2 or by rule under chapter 14, establish open seasons, limits, methods, and other requirements for taking fish on experimental waters.

History: *1985 c 248 s 70; 1986 c 386 art 3 s 1; 1992 c 462 s 15; 2000 c 473 s 12*