

Willard Says.....

Pipeline Markers

Tom emailed a plea for information or ideas on how to mark pipeline location in waters out of the main navigation channel but subject to random pleasure boat traffic. He queried the ultimate authority on all matters navigable, the US Coast Guard, and came away empty.

Tom found, as had I in a past search for information and guidance on dredge design, that the first rule is CYA (Cover Your Ass). Government bodies make the creation of rules by the gross ton seem effortless. Wise members of these bodies are acutely aware of the bureaucratic execution that awaits the career of any individual who attempts to perform an act of heroism by offering aid and counsel to one of "ragged regulated." Their best position is one of "knowing nuttin."

This left Tom up the crick w/o a paddle as to how to mark his pipeline.

I called Dick, who finds delight in using one of our fine dredges to mine sand and gravel along the shores of Mississippi River. The dredge stays out of the navigation channel but is often visited at all hours by pleasure boats, some of which are driven by the blind, the drunk and the unaware.

Dick has been at it for several years and after failing to find guidance developed an inexpensive and, so far, effective system for marking his pipeline and dredging site.

He discovered that a nearby commercial dairy operation receives chemicals in white plastic 30-gallon drums. The dairy must dispose of said drums and is happy to give them to Dick.

Dick wraps the drums with reflective tape and connects them to his plastic discharge pipe at 200-foot intervals using 40-foot long tether ropes. He dredges about 35 feet deep so the floating reflector mark the pipeline afloat or sunk. A little light cast on this array of floats creates enough reflection to raise the awareness of even the dullest.

Dick anchors several of his reflector floats around the dredging site. The system works very well, only a couple of self-admitted dummies have hit his pipeline over the years and gone away wise enough to not file suit.

Thought you might like to know about one guy's effective and inexpensive way to make boaters aware of a pipeline.

Comment, question, criticism, information on products mentioned? Contact willard@willardsays.com