

WHAT'S UP...DOCK, INC.

Austin contractor finds time- and cost-saving benefits with a versatile Komatsu PC50MR-3



Jeff Walker,
Owner

Three years ago Jeff Walker founded What's Up...Dock as a way to provide residents along Lake Austin with a complete custom boat-dock builder that could handle an entire project start to finish. A resident of the lake himself, Walker saw it as a way to help his neighbors construct quality, lower-cost docks to house their watercraft.

"People live along the lake because they want to be near the water, so obviously most of them have a boat or other watercraft," said Walker. "Living on the lake myself, I understand that they want to spend time enjoying those things and not worrying about constant maintenance of a dock. I work with customers to come up with a solution that

provides the protection for the watercraft that's unique to them and doesn't require a lot of time and money. That doesn't mean we cut corners, in fact, just the opposite. We use building products that are environmentally sensitive and durable."

In doing that, What's Up...Dock provides a full-service project that includes architectural design, engineering and permitting before construction begins. It then builds the complete dock to a customer's specifications, whether it's a floating or stationary system. In addition to building custom docks, What's Up...Dock provides other services, including enhancements to existing boat docks, boat lifts, shoreline stabilization, sheet piling and bulkheading.

What's Up...Dock does projects along the shores of Lake Austin as well as the other five bodies of water that make up the Highland Lakes on the Colorado River.

Exceeding expectations

The work can be equipment-intensive, and last year Walker made what he believes is his wisest investment. He purchased a Komatsu PC50MR-3 compact excavator from WPI's Austin branch with the help of Sales Rep Tim Hensen and Branch Manager Rick Hutchens. Walker said the PC50MR-3 gives him, and his staff of five, versatility and lower operating costs.

"We do much of our work from a barge, so the power of this excavator and its small footprint are a distinct advantage," said Walker. He had WPI install a sonic, side-grip vibrating piling device on the machine, which also uses a bucket.

Equipped with a sonic, side-grip vibrating piling device, What's Up...Dock uses the PC50MR-3 compact excavator to drive pile on a project on Lake Austin.





What's Up...Dock uses its Komatsu PC50MR-3 compact excavator to do shoreline rehabilitation work on Lake Austin. "In these tough economic times, one needs to find a better way to get the job done — and we have, thanks to Komatsu," said Owner Jeff Walker.

"We're able to drive five-and-one-half-inch steel pilings 35 feet into the lake bed from a floating work station. I can also do shoreline work, such as dredging, setting sheet pile and lifting steel I-beams during dock construction," he added. "If land-based work is needed, I simply drive the PC50 off the barge and get back to work. The PC50, combined with a new work platform I put together, has saved What's Up...Dock 30 percent in overall labor cost, and reduced my build times by more than 20 percent."

Walker expected the PC50 to be a cost-saving machine from the get-go. "I did a lot of research at CONEXPO last year, talking with nearly all the major equipment manufacturers to see what they offered. I analyzed the cost benefits and concluded that the new platform and PC50 combination would make my company stand out and reduce costs.

"After a year of use it still lives up to and exceeds our expectations," he continued. "It takes the competition three platforms to accomplish the same tasks we do with our single combination. In these tough economic times, one needs to find a better way to

get the job done — and we have, thanks to Komatsu."

Walker also has high praise for WPI, which performs service work as needed on the machine. "The PC50 is my main production unit, so it's critical that we keep it maintained to avoid downtime. I call WPI when it's time for service, and they schedule it right away. Like me, they care about customer satisfaction."

Continuing without slowing down

Walker said What's Up...Dock will continue its drive to satisfy customers with custom work done on time and on budget. He said the economic climate hasn't slowed business down, and in fact, he's booked through the rest of this year. Beyond that, he expects the work to continue, and there may be expansion in the future.

"Our philosophy is to build each and every dock to fit the customer's needs, not what we or a contractor wants," said Walker, "and we do it with usability, affordability and low maintenance in mind. It doesn't matter how complicated the project is, we're able to find a way to do it and do it right. That's our calling card." ■

