



WAKE BOARDERS

Protect Your Sport, Play Away

The Oregon State Marine Board is urging wake-boat operators to “Play Away” in 2007.

With the incredible growth in the sport of wakeboarding, wake-related complaints have increased substantially in recent years, especially in the Newberg Pool of the lower Willamette River. Citizens have proposed regulations aimed at reducing wake complaints. Indeed, the Lake Oswego Corporation adopted its own wake regulation, prohibiting the use of wake enhancing devices on Lake Oswego.

What are the complaints? Wakeboard boats are large and heavy. Many have devices, including ballast tanks or fins that help maximize a wake. In addition, some operators will load the boat to near capacity with people to increase the wake even further.

On a lake, reservoir or large river like the Columbia, the wakes often go unnoticed. But on narrow stretches of the Willamette River between Portland and Newberg, the wakes strike docks, moorages, beaches and swim areas risking damage and injury.

Add to the fact that many wakeboard boats now come with high-powered stereos, and other river users and waterfront homeowners become desperate for relief. It is at this point they call the Oregon State Marine Board seeking restrictive regulations.

So what are the solutions to the problem?

Here is a summary:

Do nothing: It's public water, right? Recreational navigation is guaranteed, right? Yes, it's public water, but individual uses aren't guaranteed. The Marine Board or even the state legislature could respond with specific restrictions.

Do something: Proposals suggested to the Marine Board include anything from "no wake-enhancing devices" to "no towed devices" on narrow stretches of the river or stretches that are highly developed.

Do prevention: This is the best option. For this to work, boaters must recognize the need to "play away" from waterfront development and other people who do not appreciate large boat wakes. Boaters should reduce the volume of their stereo, pick up their litter, and be courteous to local residents and other waterway users.

Watch for increased law enforcement in 2007.

ORS 830.305 Unsafe operation. A person commits the crime of unsafe operation of a boat if the person operates a boat in a manner that endangers or would be likely to endanger any person or property. *Fine: Maximum \$499*

ORS 830.315 Reckless operation; speed. (1) A person commits the crime of reckless operation of a boat who operates a boat carelessly and heedlessly in willful or wanton disregard of the rights, safety or property of others. *Fine: Maximum \$6,250*



Oregon State Marine Board

P.O. Box 14145

Salem, OR 97309-5065

