

Lower Willamette River Wake Damage 2017-2018

Property Owner Comments

“Over the past few years, a class of motorized boat has been developed that, in essence, create “surf wakes” for the purpose of wake surfing. Such waves are not a natural feature of the river...waves that are 4ft high and run roughly 90 degrees toward the shoreline. The problem is that the wakes generated by these craft are large enough to damage the river bank, pose harm to native fish in the nearshore area, and even cause damage to private property.”

–Travis Williams, Willamette Riverkeeper

Property #1, March, 2019 *Floating Home Moorage and Boat Marina*

The moorage has sustained unusually high levels of damage during the summers of 2017 and 2018, directly related to increased impact by wake boat wake. – Moorage Manager

June 2018: \$5,125.56. Battered boat slip on the north dock; replacement cost with three added wood piling stringer retainers. Heavy wake caused electrical lines connected from the shore to sailboats (slips) to disconnect and dangle in the water, and possible danger of electro-shock and electrocution.

November 2017: \$180 Dock gas line being stressed by wake movement. Construction of gas utility line support to prevent rupture of gas line.

May 2017: \$7,140.39. Buffeting by wake action caused broken water line under walkway.

Pending Repair: Clubhouse: Wakes have knocked it out of balance. Float needs to be leveled, needs foam adjustment, added bricks, needs to be re-positioned and bumper tires added. Walkway: heavy wake has knocked the walkway out of balance, shifted foam under the structure; it needs to be leveled and re-positioned.

Property Owner #2, October 21, 2018

As a preventative measure against power boat wakes, we spent extra money combining the decks (six) into three larger floats with new steel beams and additional logs and flotation to offset wake action. The total cost over 6 years was just over \$100,000. Other problems still remain because of continuing wakes: breaking water, gas, and sewer lines, and more importantly, endangering the lives of others living and recreating on the river.

Property Owner #3 – August 11, 2018

“Recently, I replaced a middle deck at a cost of **more than \$5,000** and within 10 days the wave action had jammed the corner of the new deck under my tender [house float] even though the two decks were level at the time the contractor finished. Two months ago, I had steel beams bolted to my front float and the steel (beams) at a cost of **\$2,000** that literally cracked apart from the wave action and parts detached from the bolts. I had them rewelded twice but they broke again and two of the four are now floating unattached. **One of the major companies that performs river repairs ...has stopped doing so because they said...we are “on the worst stretch of the Columbia and Willamette Rivers [Sellwood/Ross Island] due to all the wave action”** and that they cannot guarantee that future repairs would work.”

Property Owner #4 – February 13, 2019

“Before wake boats, we all lived quite harmoniously on the river - with the majority respecting each other. **With the advent of wake boats it has all changed.** The waves the wake boats generate are extremely damaging. **Last year I spent thousands of dollars** putting in steel beams to stabilize my swim float, but it did not work and the pins pulled out. Since that time,

I've been desperately trying to figure out a way to stop the damage caused from these huge waves. I installed a big piece of wood on my main float so that the swim float couldn't pop up and land on the main float and recently a wave was so big, it ripped the board out of my deck and hit a column that holds up my roof. It was hit so hard, it moved it several inches and is now cantilevered out over my deck."

Property Owner #5 – August 13, 2018

"A **wakeboard boat partially swamped us in our 17' Boston Whaler** as they were coming out of the Ross Island lagoon last month with a wakeboarder behind them. I don't know if they understood the problem they caused us, we were too busy mopping up and pumping water out of the boat to notice."

Property Owner #6 – August 10, 2018

"We are being battered continually by the large wakes.... We live on the inside/land-facing side, which is more buffered than the river-facing homes, yet we are rocking and rolling--not in a good way), threatening all of our docks, utilities and sewer connections. We urge you to assess and refine the existing guidelines, establish a system of accountability and financial consequences for those who create large destructive wakes."

Property Owner #7 – August 14, 2018

"These artificially induced purposefully high energy waves generate forces in different directions like a washing machine agitator. Thus, these artificial waves yield a different impact on the shore during their short duration than naturally induced waves." **"...the unnatural added impact of the relentless pounding of the waves intentionally generated by the wake generating boats.** We cannot deny the impact of the wake generating boats. It seems prudent to manage the impact of these boats and their effects rather than allow them **to damage personal property**, create dangerous waves for other river users, and more importantly to damage our environment."

Property Owner #8, August 10, 2018

"I have experienced 7.2 Richter scale earthquakes in the eastern Mediterranean. People stagger or fall to the floor to avoid injury. What float home owners suffer here in Portland, on a daily basis, is far worse. During the week this damage occurs from about 3-4pm till sundown, every day. At the weekend it is worse and starts about 2pm (some earlier) until sundown or later. A constant pounding of houses against water, and the pilings that secure our homes. Within a slip with several floats in it, **floats pound against floats, overcoming previously adequate buffers.** Code required chain connections are over stressed and will eventually fail. **Utility connections fail, leaving houses without water, a danger of gas and sewage leaks.** Cracks in walls, adjusting some doors, "popped sheet-rock nailing, utility connections, float connections and buffers. **Current estimate is \$6,000 rising to \$9,000-11,000.** We have not done this work yet as the situation is a continuing one ...no point in doing it only to...happen again next year."

Property Owner #9, April 15, 2019

"[Our Club] spent **approximately \$10,000** repairing wake damage **in 2017 & 2018.** A big spike in our annual budget. Cleats, pylon rollers, fire pipe movement and re-securing, floatation, electrical concerns and extreme movement of our outer docks that create daily safety for our owners and tenants. I've personally called in many safety reports about unsafe boating concerns that effect the local community, as well as our marina."

