

March 2021

I write to you regarding the boating and wake issues in the Newberg Pool on the Willamette River. My family and I live in Wilsonville on the Newberg Pool. My parents, sisters and I moved to this home in 1972. This was the country then and we moved into a humble ranch, built on a shoestring budget on the shoulders of the Willamette River. We were here and withstood the 1996 flood and have seen many other natural changes to the river and the banks.... But nothing like what has happened unnaturally in the last 5-8 years due to wake enhanced device (WED) boats.

I need to speak to you about the very real and personal risk to my family, my family's property, the environment in which we live and to the Willamette River and Greenway for which we are stewards. So that you appreciate the urgency: we are currently experiencing an emergency with the loss of a large part of our riverbank including several huge trees including a 130' tall 4' diameter cottonwood tree and several large fir trees that fell in December 2020, on a calm evening far before wind storms and ice storms. These trees were the homes to eagles and a resting spot for owls. These trees fell as a result of the caving in of an undercut bank caused by the enormous ocean-size and -energized waves from the use of WEDs in over-sized boats. What remains of that bank of trees, having lost their root structure, are structurally unsound trees of same or even greater height which are likely to fall either on our son's bedroom or against the bank or in the river taking incalculable cubic feet of the surrounding environment with it.

This is also about the lack of enforcement of existing rules and the inadequacy of those rules, given the increased use of and new boating and wake recreation technology. Contrary to what the supporters of WED boats state, the portion of the Newberg Pool directly east of I-5 is inundated by heavy wake boats for 3/4s of the year and we have the film to prove that.

The fact of the matter is in the last 5-8 years we have seen a tremendous increase in boat traffic including the new, larger boats fundamentally designed to create 4' high surf waves that crash into the riverbank, without losing any energy, carving out caves, depositing enormous amounts of silt in the river and cantilevering the bank so that trees now 'grow' horizontally until they fall in the river and the banks collapse. I have direct, personal knowledge and experience of the conditions on the river, the riverbank itself, and the activity on the river since 1972. Yes, over the years, riverbanks are subject to erosion and other forces of nature that cause erosion. But what has happened in the last 5-8 years is not natural:

- +due to ocean-sized and -energized waves from WED boats, riverbanks have been undercut deeply 4 or more feet up the bank, de-stabilizing the entire environment, throughout the Newberg Pool including the riverbanks of unpopulated farmland of the Greenway in-between Charbonneau and Eilers Road;

- +gone are the beavers, nutria, crawdads, and other critters and wildlife that are the natural ecosystem of this river and in a geologic micro-second of time have been chased away. (NOTE: crawdads are a species indicative of a clean and healthy water environment, when they go away it reflects a change in the water quality);

- +horizontal trees, bank slides, loss of habitat, silt deposits causing turbid waters beyond what is lawful for a citizen to cause on their property aren't the only adverse impacts due to WED-boats but also the loss of the calm and access of the Newberg Pool to all, whether swimmers, kayakers, deer and

others that wish to enjoy and respect this unique and fragile environmental gift is lost now because from April -October during the wake boat season, the tumult and violent disturbance to everyone and thing throughout the Newberg Pool is untenable and unapproachable for anyone other than the few rich people with really expensive boats who want to surf behind a boat in a protected environment.

There are other appropriate and sufficient bodies of water for surfing. The Newberg Pool and this waterway is too narrow for WED boat wake-surfing. If we lose the Newberg Pool, it cannot be replaced with money or policies or promises; it will be gone forever as we're losing it now. Once the bank and its biodiversity are gone due to WED-boats, it's gone.

My folks moved here on purpose: my mom served on the Planning Commission and innumerable other local groups and roles for decades in Wilsonville; my dad instilled in us the ethics of stewardship not just through his own public service and commitment to this community but as one of the first 'river-keepers' around here and a crawdad-lover! We've supported and are a part of Wilsonville through community service, school events, tree projects, dog parks, and local charities; we're dug in here. And yet we're only temporary and are the successor-stewards of this part of the Willamette River Greenway. We are and, since our life here, have been responsible for the use, maintenance and health of these banks, this river and all of the life on it. We can't stay silent as we watch others, most of whom are not from here, attack our state treasure through WED boats and their unlawful and destructive use in the Newberg Pool.

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