

Anonymous Dock Building Company

March 7, 2021

To whom it may concern:

My company has been serving our customer's needs for boat docks and their gangways in Oregon for over 30 years. We have seen the effects of wake boarding and now more recently, wake surfing not only on docks, gangways and moorage systems but on the banks as well. I believe it was in the early 2000's when wake boarding first showed up on the Willamette river mostly by people putting in water sacks in their competition ski boats. By the mid 2000's, the wake board boats were in full force and in the last five years have been switched out to the new wake "surf" boats. These boats are massive and can create wakes that are over five feet tall and the wake is designed to be sharp. That huge sharp wake causes extreme damage to boat docks. The moorage system or piling holders as most people call them simply can not hold up to the constant pounding of this big wake hitting the dock over and over again. Just as important is the eroding of the bank. In the past ten years, we've seen time and again where these extreme wakes undercut the bank at the summer time level (low water). Then in the winter when the soil on the bank above the undercut becomes saturated with water, it will sluff off or landslide into the river. Only a quick boat ride up the Willamette River will confirm this. The shoreline is also being changed due to the wakes in the summer. Aquatic flora and fauna as well as the small fish have no home along the banks of the river anymore. In our early years, you could see all sorts of aquatic species thriving along the shoreline but now they are all but gone. Another impact with these extreme wakes is the swimming next to the boat docks. Our customers frequently tell us that they cannot allow their children and grandchildren in the water next to the boat dock since they can be slammed into the side of the dock and severely injured when these massive wakes come. And these wakes travel from one side of the river to the other with only limited attenuation by the time they reach the other side. They are designed to be sharp and high and stay that way for hundreds of feet.

My company is not against wake board or surf wake board boats. I do believe they should have an area to operate in but that area has to be away from where boat docks, and people swim and relax in the river.