

Dear Legislators,

I have flatwater kayaked for many years on rivers and oceans in North America. Typically I will launch at Molalla River State Park boat ramp to paddle the Willamette River. Outside of launching in the ocean surf this ramp is the most dangerous place from which I have ever launched. Given that, I have grave concern about current and impending traffic in the Newberg Pool of the Willamette as I have two personal experiences caused by wakeboard boats. Firstly about three year ago a large boat with three people sitting in the rear, to create a larger wake, was throwing the largest wake that I had ever seen. This was early evening and ostensibly the boat was out later than most because of the size of the wake that it would create because wakes of this size already were illegal. I was next to a dock when I saw the wake coming at me and it threw me against the dock then pulled me away and after three times of this I capsized. Fortunately no damage was done except for the loss of my glasses. As I was wondering back to my original dock the landowner came down and said the the big wake boats typically come later to avoid patrol and then showed me where his bank was eroding.

The second experience was this last week when a boat, not towing, threw a wake that almost capsized me as I was trying to get onto shore at the boat ramp but the wave volume was such that it made me just hang on while my boat filled about one third with water from the consecutive wakes. I wish that you would have the opportunity to visit my local ramp and observe the type of boat traffic that is there. One thing that you would notice is how the original ramp has been almost totally undercut by the river current and boat waves. The other thing that you might notice is the number of paddle watercraft that get launched here. So many big box stores now sell very small and light sit on top kayaks and usually these are brought to the ramp by beginning paddlers. Often they will have one or two children in boat that was designed for one paddler. These type of boats with a higher center of gravity can easily be overturned. I believe that the intersection of large wake throwing boats and small paddle craft is a true recipe for some very injurious wake accidents. Hebb park on the other side of the river has a similar situation.

Many times wake and wave boaters disregard the distance that they are required to keep from powerless boats. This is also quite a problem as the driver is often trying to watch the party being towed and not paying attention to smaller craft. Obviously the bigger the boat the bigger the wake and the heavy wakeboard boats certainly create a larger wave. Now with the popularity of wake surfing these boats create even a larger wave than the wakeboard boats. Interestingly the large wake surf boats seem to run closer to the shore. Perhaps this is trying to be more respectful of other small boaters, but of course this creates more shore damage.

I believe that you have been shown how these large boat wakes damage the shore, but I have not seen much testimony about how they create safety hazards for small boaters. In terms of safety I believe that there should be a no wake zone from approximately the mouth of the Molalla River downstream to about a half mile downstream from Hebb Park. This would hopefully prevent on the water accidents that I am fearful could happen in the future in the area if not regulated. This of course would apply to all boats large or small, but at least it would keep the heavy wake boats from throwing that large wake on smaller craft in this area.

Respectfully;

Roy Marvin

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