

March 22, 2025

Please do not move SB301 forward

We have lived on the Willamette River (upriver from the Hwy. 219 bridge) in the Newberg Pool for almost 20 years and have observed in horror the consistent and ever greater erosion of the shoreline and destruction of the natural habitat, particularly after the Marine Board prohibited wake-enhancing devices downriver from the Hwy. 219 bridge. Prior to that ruling, the shoreline had minor erosion from winter/spring flooding, but nothing of any significance.

After that ruling, wake surf boats dominated this narrow stretch of river, caused irreversible damage to the shorelines and made it hazardous to try to even stand on the dock or to attempt to kayak, paddleboard or swim. Thank goodness for the tireless work of many individuals and conservation groups that convinced the Marine Board to change those wake surf rules which has relieved the shoreline erosion and recreational challenges in some portions of the river, but even in zones where there was no wake surfing allowed, the heavily weighted boats (over 5500lbs) still drove by and left destruction in their wake (pun intended). The passage of SB1589 completely eliminated wake surfing on this skinny stretch of river and it has been lovely to see the riverbanks returning to their former glory and to see hundreds more people paddleboarding, canoeing, skiing, swimming and kayaking safely.

The pictures below illustrate the catastrophic damage to the riverbank since heavy wake-making boats and wake surfing became popular. Since the passage of SB1589 and subsequent elimination of heavily weighted boats in the Newberg Pool, **we have observed very little change in the riverbank** and are optimistic that its continuance **as is** will further protect the Willamette River for future generations.

I have personally read at least two studies that prove wakes created by heavy boats create erosion. **Those studies should be used as the scientific reason to continue to limit the total weight (dry weight and ballast combined) of boats in the Newberg Pool to 5500 lbs. in order to protect the sensitive shoreline, fish and wildlife habitats from the destructive wake energy of heavier boats.**

Those in favor of SB301 would have you believe that they are no longer able to boat with their families in the upper Willamette river which is just simply not true. The only two things they can no longer do is: 1) use a boat with a capacity for weighing over 5500 pounds including ballast and 2) wake surf. Family time is not threatened in the least...use a lighter boat and you can still wakeboard, ski and tube. Or keep the heavy boat, and wake surf on a larger body of water like the Columbia.

In summary, over the past ten years, increased boat traffic combined with larger and heavier boats created a dangerous and destructive environment on the Willamette River, particularly in the Newberg Pool. This is something that cannot be sustained. **Please do the right thing to continue to protect river banks, water quality, safety for motorized and non-motorized recreation and wildlife on the Willamette.**

We urge you **not** to move SB301 forward. We appreciate the opportunity to contact you.

Best regards,

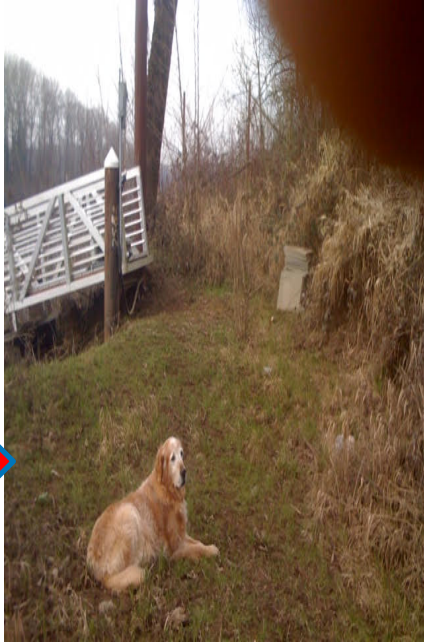
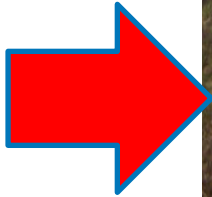
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Riverbank April 2008

Arrows indicate land that no longer exists



Riverbank Comparison Spring 2011 vs 2017



This land (30 feet) has now almost completely eroded. In prior years, this land would flood during winter/spring, but there was no riverbank erosion as illustrated in the next slide. Gangway had to be lowered 3 feet & additional ramp had to be added to gangway for access.

Bank erosion 2016



This is where the dog is laying in the 2011 photo. 30 feet of land gone and still falling.