



***Boating Safety Committee Meeting Summary
November 9, 2011 - 3 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.
Fifth floor conference room,
Centennial Campus, Raleigh***

Meeting Attendees:

Joe Barker, Chair	Randall Newman – Fort Macon State Park
Doug Parsons, Vice Chair	Don Reuter – NC DPR
Berkley Skinner	Adrian O’Neal – NC DPR
Mitch St. Clair	Cmdr. James W. Mitchell - USCG
Mark Craig	Chief Thaddeus M. Bouchard - USCG
Wes Seegars	Greg Culpepper
Steve Windham	Geoff Cantrell
Dave Hoyle	Anna Stefanowicz
Dalton Ruffin	Col. Dale Caveny
Ric Wright	Erik Christofferson
Heather Geary	Gordon Myers
Betsy Foard	Mallory Martin
Norman Young	

Call to Order and Comments - introductory comments and welcome by Committee Chairman Joe Barker.

Discussion - No Wake Zone Request - Fishing Creek in Fort Macon State Park, Carteret County- Betsy Foard, No Wake Zone Coordinator, facilitated discussion about the previously tabled request by the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation, in particular Fort Macon State Park, on behalf of the United States Coast Guard Sector North Carolina to establish a no wake zone within the waters of Fishing Creek, a shallow and narrow tidal creek that runs through Fort Macon State Park. Representatives from the USCG and State Parks were in attendance and presented in favor of establishment of a no wake zone. State Parks and the Coast Guard representatives cited concerns about hazards to water safety and to recreational users of the creek, although no accidents, near misses, or hazardous operation of vessels have been documented and no numbers are available regarding recreational users of the creek. The Committee was informed that two public hearings have been held and public comments received, all but one, from the USCG, in opposition. Additional comments by local residents, all in opposition, have been directed to the committee chair. Upon further consideration and discussion by committee and staff a recommendation to take no action on this request will be taken to the full Wildlife Commission meeting on November 10, 2011.

No Wake Zone Mapping Presentation; BAA and PFA Mapping Applications - Anna Stefanowicz, GIS Specialist, presented an update about innovations with Geographic Information Systems with satellite technology, new software and smart phone, iPhone and laptop devices that have put waterway information and navigational assistance into easy-to-use formats. Mapping no wake zones, boating access areas and buoys as geographic information, and expanding capabilities to provide access to such information through current technology have been a major undertaking by Stefanowicz and Foard. Users of the systems will be able to view info and mapping by Internet access. With verification of marked and unmarked no wake zones by Wildlife Enforcement Officers, more than 500 no wake zones have been mapped across the state. Stefanowicz told the Committee that more than 50 problems with no wake zones that require technical corrections will be addressed and forwarded to the Wildlife Resources Commission for approval.

Discussion – Enforcement and Safety - Col. Dale Caveny, Law Enforcement Division Chief, facilitated discussion about law enforcement issues pertaining to water safety. Committee heard an update on a pending proposal for changes to the definition of “vessel” or an exemption from the requirement to carry personal flotation devices on certain “vessels.” Caveny explained that under the current definition an inner tube or swim noodle are vessels. Caveny explained to the committee that the intent of waterway patrols is safety. The ultimate goal is compliance with the law. Uniformity must be upheld in application of laws state-wide. Where issuance of a warning ticket is permissible, there needs to be an assurance that a warning results in a correction by the boater to operate within legal requirements of North Carolina. Currently, some two-thirds of all boating citations issued are warnings.

Adjournment – Chairman Joe Barker adjourned the committee meeting at 4:45 pm.