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**LNMC MINUTES**

**June 08, 2020**

**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

**(this meeting has been recorded and is posted at lnmc.org)**

**Lake Norman Marine Commissioners:**

Billy Wilson Chairman

Michael Hughes Lincoln County

Dennis Eddinger Mecklenburg County

David Scott Catawba County

Rick Howard Iredell County

**Staff:**

Morris Sample Executive Director

John Gerke Asst. Ex. Director

Angela Palmer Administrator

**Call to Order**

A quorum was declared and the meeting was called to order by Chairman Wilson at 7:00 pm.

All in attendance rose to salute the flag and repeat together the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes**

After a review of the minutes from the May 11, 2020 meeting, there was a motion to approve by Commissioner Eddinger, seconded by Commissioner Scott. Approval of the minutes as presented were passed unanimously.

**Reports – LNMC Executive Director**

Executive Director Morris Sample reported the following items:

* Lake traffic has been relatively heavy so far this year. It is anticipated that due to other travel restrictions, we may see heavy traffic on the lake during the weekends. Be advised that most marinas have establish procedures for docking and getting gas and supplies. Please contact the marina prior to arrival for any special instructions. Also, policy on rental boats vary according to the location. Please be cautious of group gatherings at islands or raft ups.
* NC Wildlife has installed acoustic receivers on 32 of the ATON’s on the lake. These are attached with a wire cable from just above the water line on the poles. Please do not disturb this installation. The receivers will be used to track tagged hybrid bass and next year grass carp to determine range of fish movement and mortality.
* NC Wildlife, Duke Energy, Charlotte Water, LNMC and DEQ released 750 sterile grass carp into Lake Norman on May 20th at Ramsey Creek Park. This release is our ongoing effort to control hydrilla. Survey conducted by NC State in fall of 2019 did not find any hydrilla, however, we can expect growth from the tubers that are currently in Ramsey Creek to sprout each spring for the next 7-8 years so a population of grass carp should keep this new growth under control. If anyone observes weed growth in the lake please notify us at lmnc@lnmc.org. Good to include pictures and exact location.
* Due to meeting restrictions, boater education classes scheduled have been delayed. Online courses are available through several organizations. Also, information on boater regulations is available on the NC Wildlife website with links on the Marine Commission Website, LNMC.ORG. The Lake Norman Boater’s Guide is located under the Resources tab and lists information on facilities and boating regulations.
* We continue to receive complaints about wakes from wake surfing activity. LNMC has formed a study committee to evaluate the issue to determine if additional controls in form of LNMC Ordinance is appropriate. This group has been delayed due to pandemic, but we are evaluating how to get the group to start meeting soon. Hopefully, we can have some consistent recommendations later this year that can be used for ordinance and presented to state legislatures.
* LNMC committed recently on a proposed amendment to state boating regulation 75A-13 concerning Water skis, surfboards, etc which would have required a skier down flag be displayed when a skier was in the water. We have researched similar requirements with the following results:
* 41 states require skier to wear a PFD, NC law only requires one of three conditions: PFD, Observer or Rear View Mirror
* 34 states require an observer for towing water sports activities
* 12 states require observer or rear view mirror
* 28 states allow towing from sunset to sunrise
* 8 states allow ½ hour prior to sunrise to ½ hour after sunset
* 7 states allow 1 hour prior to sunrise to 1 hour after sunset, NC is one
* 15 states require use of skier down flag

LNMC is recommending that regulation 75A-13 be amended for all of NC to require the following:

1. Anyone being towed or wake surfing must wear a PFD with appropriate impact rating.
2. All boats towing must either have an observer or wide-angle rear-view mirror.
3. All towing must be conducted from sunrise to sunset.

**REPORTS - ENFORCEMENT**

**Cornelius Police Department**

CPD reported 45 calls for service, 498 zone checks and conducted lake enforcement activities. Most calls were Sunday between 12:00pm-6:00pm. Average report time 7.2 minutes

**Iredell County Sheriff**

Lake Patrol with Iredell County reported the lake has been very active. Much busier than the past with so many people at home. This past weekend was very busy and assisted NC Wildlife. Here to assist where needed.

**Catawba County**

Catawba County Lake Patrol – No report

**Lincoln County**

Lincoln County Lake Patrol – No Report

**N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission**

Ron Robertson reported with COVID-19 officers limiting public contact and focusing on major violations, Boating While Impaired, etc. Still addressing some minor things. Officers wearing masks due to public complaints. The real issue with masks is trying to communicate. Memorial Day weekend On the Road, On the Water Campaign Phase 1. The weather played a role. On Saturday worked with all 3 districts to focus on boating while impaired and underage drinking. Only 3 citations and 1 arrest for .11 blood alcohol level. 9 underage drinking for under 18 and released to their parents. Sunday, 1 additional arrest for a .23 alcohol level. Busy with boating incidents. Saturday, May 16th 3 operator accident. Anchored and swimming, 2nd boat swerving to make wake for jetski, sprayed by jetski and boater 2 operator hit the anchored boat. Charges for careless and reckless operation. Sunday, May 17th 14 yo operating pwc struck another pwc injuring the operator and needed medical attention. Juvenile petition was filed. May 23rd Catawba County 30’+ cruiser started taking on water and sink. Awaiting results for cause. June 6th multiple accidents. Vessel docked at Blue Parrot was struck by another vessel that fled the scene. Only got partial boat number. Less than $500 damage so not reportable. Docked vessel at Hello Sailor and witness stated operator appeared to be impaired and struck another boat and fled the scene. Sunday, June 7th mail being pulled on a tube south of Hager’s Creek access area, attempted barrel roll resulting in injury and needed medical attention. 2 females being towed on tube and went airborne and contorted and struck head on the other passenger needing medical attention. Rental house Lake Norman north of Hwy 150 had a kayaker, not wearing a life vest, disappear and the body was recovered around 11:00pm in 44’ of water. Today, reported incident from last night pontoon hit while in the slip causing significant motor damage. Charged with failing to report the accident. This brings the total drownings for 2020 to 2.

**Reports – Lake Issues**

**Duke Energy**

Executive Director Sample reported for Chad Broadway - lake level today is 97.9 and the target level is 98. The target level will remain at 98 for the duration of recreation season through September. Lake Services is still accepting and processing lake use permit applications at this time, but with a very limited amount of office time for staff. At least through mid-July, we will not be available to answer calls to the 1-800 phone line. All calls will be routed to voicemail and returned, but it may be the next business day. Therefore, you will receive a more timely response if you email lakeservices@duke-energy.com instead of calling. During normal business operations, we advise applicants to expect it to take up to 30 days to process a lake use permit application. However, our reduced office presence will likely result in longer permit application processing times than is typical, so please plan accordingly. Contact Joe Kluttz (Iredell/Mecklenburg) 704-382-7506 or joseph.kluttz@duke-energy.com or Chad Broadway (Lincoln/Catawba) 704-574-4065 or chad.broadway@duke-energy.com

**Coast Guard Auxiliary Division 26**

Steve Riggins reported:

* On water activities are typically conducted on Lake Norman from April 1 – October 30.
* All in-person CG Auxiliary activities were suspended in early March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so all activity for on-water patrols, Vessel Examinations, and boating safety classes has ceased.
* CG Auxiliary is authorized to hold virtual on-line meetings for routine business and on-line member training, which has been taken advantage of by the Lake Norman flotillas.
* A new computer system to track CG Auxiliary activity is now installed and training underway.
* If Lake Safety Day proceeds on June 20 as planned, CGAUX participation will depend on CGAUX allowing normal operations to resume.

**Lake Norman – America’s Boating Club**

Executive Director Sample reported America’s Boating Club has agreed to do the lake survey and it is in process. Expecting results over the next few weeks. All on the water activities and boater safety classes have been suspended until further notice.

**Mecklenburg County Parks and Rec.**

No Report

**Island Habitat Program & NC Wildlife Federation**

Chairman Billy Wilson reported great blue heron cam is back online and has been upgraded to inferred and getting great night shots. Also installed artificial osprey nesting platform that is visible. NCWF.org Also available on FB Livestream.

**Catawba Riverkeepers**

Michael Lindsey - No Report

**Water Quality/Erosion/Buffers/Illegal Discharge**

**Mecklenburg County Water Quality**

Executive Director Sample reported FB reported swim advisory for the entire lake that was inaccurate. There was a swim advisory on Lake Wylie that could’ve led to the confusion.

**Comments from the Public:**

* Lane Yates thanked the commission for their work. July 4th patriotic parade to be held. No alcohol, no swimming, no tubing and must abide by all lake rules. Parade will be at idle speed. There will be guides. The goal is to make it a fun and safe parade. Beginning at the north end working toward the center part of the main channel. Commencement at 1:00pm by Trump National then cruising down toward Cowan’s Ford Dam. Safety is the number 1 goal. Will also be promoting a fundraiser under Gofundme to help local small businesses to ramp back up and set up local fund for disabled veterans. Want to ensure that all law enforcement is well informed.
* Pat O’Donnell expressed appreciation for the time to speak. Presented 2 posters. Lives at 144 Pomeroy Lane, Mooresville. Asking to repost rafting rules at the landings, in the paper, etc. Increased visits by lake patrol.
* Tom McCune has an issue with the no wake buoy law and the police. Feels it impossible to handle everything that is going on, on the lake. No Wake Buoy issue – a wake travels thousands of yards and 150’ isn’t enough. The law needs to be changed to make the coves a sanctuary to enjoy the lake. Would like to see people given the ability to issue no wake citations to relieve some of the pressure from the police force. Would like to be able to be on the commission or participate in anyway to resolve these issues.

**Committee Reports:**

**ATON Committee**

Morris Sample reported the following needs repair…

* Marker 6 is missing, will be replaced.
* New Marker 17C & 17D to be installed in the Riviera Drive area
* Marker D6 light out, will be replaced.
* Marker 3, 7 & M1 lights not visible due to Osprey nest, will be repaired in the fall after Ospreys leave.

Repairs recently completed:

* Both Hwy 150 Bridge no wake buoys have been replaced.

Power Squadron, America’s Boating Club is currently surveying all the ATONS, shoal markers and bridge buoys to determine any needed repairs. We greatly appreciate their work on this project. Please report any items needing repairs to lnmc@lnmc.org.

**Environmental Committee**

Morris Sample – see previous comments under Executive Director report

**Boater Education/Communication**

Dave Scott – People are coming to the website with about 100-150 new users each week.

**Charter Boat Committee**

Commissioner Eddinger reported charter boat season has started. Carolina Grace had it’s first cruise Saturday night. Looking forward to a good season.

**No Wake Buoys**

Commissioner Michael Hughes – No report

**Rafting Committee**

Chairman Rick Howard – No Report

**Applications**

**No-Wake Buoy Requests -** None

**Rafting Applications** - None

**Charter Boat Applications** - None

**Variances**

None

**PERMITS**

None

**FERC Applications**

None

**Administrative Matters**

2019-2020 Budget notifying the commissioners of a few adjustments to stay within budget.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01pm.