



**Lake Norman Marine Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes – May 21, 2026**

The Lake Norman Marine Commission met in Regular Session on Thursday, May 21, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., in the Community Room at Lake Norman State Park at 759 State Park Rd., Troutman, NC 28166.

Members present were Barbara G. Beatty, Jarid Church, Richard C. Gaskins, Mark Mullen, Jason Ralston, Cameron Sloan, Gregory Truesdell (virtual participant), and Billy Wilson. Also present were Catawba County Manager Ms. Furtado and Centralina Regional Council staff support to the board Megan Upchurch.

1. **Call to Order.** Commission Vice-Chair Beatty called the regular meeting of the Lake Norman Marine Commission to order at 7:00 p.m., noting a quorum was present.
2. **Public Comments.** The floor was opened for public comment regarding items listed on the meeting agenda. No members of the public stepped forward to comment, and the public comment session was closed.
3. **Approval of Minutes.** Commissioner Gaskins made a motion to approve the Regular Minutes of the April 16th Lake Norman Marine Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wilson and passed unanimously.
4. **Partner Reports**
 - **Catawba County Sheriff's Office:** Logged 97 hours on the water, conducted 38 boat inspections, completed 220 property checks, answered 15 calls for service, attended 44 community meetings, removed three navigational hazards, took 30 enforcement actions, and assisted four vessels. Participated in a community project, assisted with a boat grounding incident at the State Park, assisted with a bass tournament on Lake Hickory, and executed joint water training with the SBI. Announced an upcoming public boater safety education course in June.
 - **Iredell County Sheriff's Office:** Presented April operational figures, which included responding to two trespasser calls, seven suspicious persons, and six suspicious vehicles. Conducted 785 security checks and handled seven 911 calls. Lakeside operations included inspecting 22 PWCs and 33 boats, resulting in 33 safety



violations, 14 equipment violations, and one boating while impaired citation. Assisted five disabled vessels, removed 10 navigational hazards, and responded to one vessel crash. Responded to a drowning incident involving a 27-year-old male. Logged 458 water patrol hours, 84 training hours, and 320 land hours.

- Cornelius Police Department: Responded to 34 calls last month and an average response time of six minutes. Participated in the Davidson Spring Fest by bringing a patrol boat for local children to tour. Noted that the Ramsey Creek boat ramp is completely closed and Blythe landing is limited to a single open ramp due to low water levels.
- Lincoln County: Not present. No report.
- Mt. Mourne Fire Department: Reported that 11 of the 13 local fire departments with lake frontage recently met to review water asset capabilities and update regional response plans. Confirmed there are currently 5 primary fire boats on the lake featuring a pump capacity of over 1,500 gallons per minute.
- Duke Energy Lake Services: Mr. Broadway introduced Caleb Williams (lake representative for Lincoln and Catawba counties) and lake representative Jesse McDonald. He reported current lake levels at 94.3 feet, significantly below the designated 98.5-foot recreation target. He also confirmed the basin has moved into Stage 2 of the Low Inflow Protocol due to severe drought conditions and announced that voluntary water restrictions have shifted to mandatory restrictions, requiring lake-fed residential irrigation to occur strictly on Tuesdays and Saturdays. It was noted that Ramsey Creek access is closed, Little Creek access is the next expected to face low-water disruptions, and all Duke-owned access ramps will be forced offline if the water level hits 91 feet.
- Mecklenburg County Water Quality – Not present. No report.
- Lake Norman State Park: Reported the park's boat launch remains open but carries a "launch at your own risk" advisory because low water limits pavement clearance for large vessels. The public swim beach is open at users' own risk, with lifeguards scheduled to start in July.
- Catawba Riverkeeper: Mr. Brandon Jones reported the floating classroom is fully operational and recently hosted its first pilot school group from Mecklenburg County. He noted House Bill 369 has successfully advanced out of the Senate committee and is expected to pass by next Tuesday. He highlighted an ongoing biological control project utilizing to manage invasive alligator weed on Lake Wylie and Mountain Island Lake to keep it from spreading northward into Lake Norman.
- NC Wildlife Resource Commission: Responded to over 10 recent lake incidents, including five reportable accidents, two boating fatalities, and a boat grounding



near Buffalo Shoals that caused impact injuries. Processed three BWI arrests and confirmed full-time holiday and weekend patrols are deployed for the summer.

- NC Wildlife Federation / Lake Norman Wildlife (Billy Wilson): Commissioner Wilson shared updates on a youth fishing derby, drawing 40 children and awarding two lifetime North Carolina fishing licenses. He shared that just over half of the local islands have been adopted through the island habitat clean-up program. He noted progress is being made on a 3D-printed fish reef deployment.
- NC Department of Environmental Quality – Not present. No report.

5. Non-Project Use Applications - Request for Commission Comments

- **NCDOT STIP Project #R-572:** Ms. Furtado presented an application for a 2.49-mile NCDOT road widening project on NC 73 in Mecklenburg County. The application requires Commission evaluation because the construction impacts the slope toe of an earthen dam situated inside the FERC project boundary. Chad Broadway clarified that Duke Energy's dam safety division and FERC in Washington are thoroughly reviewing the engineering plans, confirming there are no structural impacts on the lakeside. The Commission inquired if Duke Energy will be monitoring construction, to which Mr. Broadway noted there will be both public and private organizations monitoring the project. A motion was made to support the project and submit a formal letter of concurrence by Commissioner Gaskins and seconded by Commissioner Sloan. The motion passed unanimously.
- **Lake Norman Dredging and Marine Construction Site Proposal:** Ms. Furtado introduced a proposal for a commercial-grade boat ramp, travel lift conveyor, bulkhead docks, service pier, and an excavation spoil offload area located at the existing Lake Norman Dredging and Marine Construction site off Slanting Bridge Road in Catawba County. The project was reviewed by LNMC in 2023 but never implemented. Because agency reviews require refreshed comments every two years, the applicant resubmitted the project alongside an updated lake facility safety plan. Board members raised concerns regarding active site aesthetics, erosion control mechanisms, and potential silt/rock spillage directly affecting a major navigation channel. A motion was made by Commissioner Mullen to table the item for one month to allow for potential site investigations and to formally invite the applicant to present at the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gaskins and approved 8-0.

6. Committee Updates



- **ATONS / Buoy:** Gary Mozeley reported the team received its initial batch of lights and repaired 11 markers last week, including 10 buoys around the Slanting Bridge and Mount Pleasant areas. To date, 39 out of 68 identified non-operational lights have been successfully replaced. Newly installed bird pedestals are successfully preventing osprey nesting directly on top of active lights. The committee is continuing legal and operational discussions with partner agencies (including Lake Wylie personnel) to establish a standardized protocol for addressing residential requests for new or removed no-wake buoys across unowned lake commons.
 - **Charter Boats, Rental Boats, and Rafting:** The committee reviewed proposed updates to the charter and rental boat ordinances, focusing on syncing charter definitions with Duke Energy standards and replacing passenger-count metrics. Proposed modifications include restructuring permit fees to directly fund the ATONS safety and maintenance programs, implementing standardized Coast Guard Auxiliary inspections, and adjusting liability insurance rules. Members highlighted a growing enforcement issue regarding companies using standard rental boat permits to illegally execute commercial charter operations.
 - **Environmental:** No new updates to report.
 - **Government / Legislative:** Committee to start regular meetings later this year. It was noted the legislature is finishing its short session. The committee plans to convene ahead of next year's long session to align with regional representatives on necessary local bill changes and recodification clean-ups.
7. **Executive Director recruitment update.** The search committee has identified several viable candidates, having conducted a previous round of interviews with another round scheduled to take place on May 29th.
8. **FY26/27 Budget Update.** Ms. Furtado presented the working draft budget. Commissioners were directed to funnel all feedback and budget assumptions to Ms. Furtado or the budget subcommittee by June 1st. The mandatory public hearing for the official budget adoption will take place at the next scheduled meeting on June 18th.
9. **Open Discussion.** Commissioner Beatty thanked partners and the public for coming to the meeting.
10. **Adjourn.** With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m. after a motion by Commissioner Sloan, which was seconded by Commissioner Gaskins, passed unanimously.