



Lake Norman Marine Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes – July 16, 2026

The Lake Norman Marine Commission met in Regular Session on Thursday, July 16, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., in the Community Room at Charlotte Water – Dukes Treatment Plant at 7980 Babe Stillwell Farm Rd., Huntersville, NC 28078.

Members present were Barbara Beatty, Jarid Church, Richard Gaskins, Mark Mullen, Jason Ralston, and Billy Wilson. Members not present were Tim Holder, Cameron Sloan, and Gregory Truesdell. Also present were Lake Norman Marine Commission Executive Director Jim Loftin, Catawba County Manager Mary Furtado, and Centralina Regional Council staff support to the board Megan Upchurch.

- 1. Call to Order & Approval of Agenda.** 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. A motion was made by Commissioner Mullen and seconded by Commissioner Gaskins to approve the meeting agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.
- 2. Approval of Minutes.** The Commission reviewed the minutes from the regular monthly board meeting held on June 18, 2026. Commissioner Gaskins made a motion to approve June 18, 2026 minutes as distributed. Commissioner Mullen seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- 3. Public Comment.** Vice-Chair Beatty opened the public comment period, outlining the rules permitting each speaker to spend up to three minutes to address items related to the Commission's jurisdiction without interactive Q&A. Public comment was received from Jeff Weir, representing the Freedom Boat Club. Mr. Weir informed the Commission about the annual "*Big Day at the Lake*" event scheduled for Saturday, July 18, 2026. He detailed that local boat hosts and approximately 30 Freedom Boat Club vessels would take 100 to 150 Big Brothers Big Sisters and their mentors onto the water, followed by an afternoon picnic. He encouraged the Marine Commission to continue backing the initiative in future years. Hearing no further requests to speak, the Vice Chair officially closed the public comment period.



4. Partner Reports

- **Catawba County Lake Patrol:** Staff reported monthly activity, including 358 hours logged on the water, 140 boat inspections, 204 property checks, 55 calls for service, 181 community contacts/meetings, 10 navigational hazards removed, 121 enforcement actions, and 18 vessel assists. Key operational responses included assisting Iredell County with distressed children reunited with their parents, assisting Lincoln County with the Dog Island event, a self-inflicted gunshot wound, assisting with a high-speed vessel collision, and escorting an individual injured in a rope-swing fall to Marker 19 for EMS transport.
- **Cornelius Police Department:** Officer Ian Claussen reported that weekend afternoon hours (12:00 PM to 6:00 PM) represented the peak activity period. Updates included hosting a week-long youth lake camp, assisting Lincoln County with the Dog Island event with minimal regional spillover, and conducting community outreach at the Joshua Murray Center in partnership with local media to educate boaters on the dangers of operating under the influence.
- **Iredell County Lake Patrol:** Staff reported 426 land calls for service, 1 BUI/impaired driver arrest on land, 23 traffic stops, and 1,700 property security checks around water-adjacent businesses. Water operations totaled over 600 land hours and 870 water hours, inspecting 35 PWCs and 51 boats, issuing 29 safety/equipment citations, handling 3 alcohol offenses, assisting 4 sinking or distressed vessels, clearing 15 navigational hazards, and conducting 49 vessel stops. Officers assisted with a non-boating drowning involving a swimmer on July 4th, as well as 3 medical calls, 2 fire assists, and 12 law enforcement assists.
- **Lincoln County Lake Patrol:** Not present. No report.
- **US Coast Guard Auxiliary:** Steve Regan presented the activity report on behalf of the three local units, detailing 9 water patrols (59 hours), 7 boating safety classes graduating 114 students, and 303 vessel safety checks completed. The Auxiliary provided safety patrols for the Dog Island event, conducted hands-on safety check training for Cornelius Police summer campers, participated in Lake Safety Promotion Day, and scheduled sold-out safety classes.



- **North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission:** Staff reported significant enforcement presence over the Dog Island event and the July 4th holiday weekend, resulting in approximately 7 BWIs during Dog Island, 5 BWIs over July 4th, and over 50 total citations issued. He noted public civility during inspections but raised logistical concerns regarding paid charter operators abandoning over 50 event goers on Dog Island, requiring fire department rescue transport. Other incidents included a spinal injury from a shallow water jump, a boat-over-boat collision, and a severe steering-failure collision near Highway 150 where a performance boat struck a pontoon vessel carrying 11 passengers, resulting in non-fatal injuries confined to the operator.
- **Fire & Rescue Services:** Staff reported 18 calls for service over the past 30 days, including 3 patient transports from Dog Island, 2 medical transports, 1 large sinking vessel, 2 boat collisions, 1 stranded boat, 1 drowning response, 1 dock fire, and 1 distressed boat. Denver Fire Department responded to 7 calls, including 3 water rescues, 1 grounding, 1 service call, and 1 structure fire.
- **Mecklenburg County Water Quality:** Ms. Mary Furtado presented the report on behalf of Dave Ferguson. Laboratory results for the bacterial sampling run showed excellent water quality across routine monitoring sites. The Blythe Boat Ramp recorded slightly elevated levels due to localized parking lot stormwater runoff, remaining well within the state action threshold of 200.
- **Duke Energy Lake Services:** Ms. Casey Brennan reported the lake level at 95.17 feet, with the basin remaining in Stage 2 Low Inflow Protocol water restrictions. June rainfall averaged two-thirds of historical normals following 17 below-average months out of the last 19. Ms. Brennan announced a new policy effective July 1, 2026: Duke Energy will no longer accept facility ID or dock applications adjacent to vacant lots unless a primary home is constructed or "dried-in" to mitigate safety hazards and unmonitored dock deterioration.
- **Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation:** Mr. Brandon Jones reported mid-season water quality monitoring across 8 Lake Norman sites has yielded zero bacterial failures during the ongoing dry period. Volunteer boat captains were requested to continue helping with southern lake sampling. On legislative updates, Mr. Jones noted the passage of the state parking lot/stormwater bill, state funding for an NC State water



quantity study, data center moratoriums in Charlotte and Rock Hill, and ongoing Floating Classroom bookings.

- **NC Wildlife Federation / Lake Norman Wildlife:** Commission Wilson provided an update later in the meeting in tandem with the Beatty's Ford Park Fish Habitat Enhancement.
- **NC Department of Environmental Quality:** Not present. No report.

5. Non-project Use Applications

- **Duke Energy – Combustion Turbine Intake:** The Commissioners reviewed a non-project use application submitted by Duke Energy to construct a new surface water intake in Lake Norman to support two proposed simple cycle combustion turbine generating units. Commissioners engaged in discussion regarding daily withdrawal volumes (which were included in the information packet), return discharge points and volumes, thermal impacts on water temperatures, and potential effects on invasive species. Following a discussion on the Commission's role in public safety and lake environmental health, the Commissioners decided that additional technical details were needed before taking formal action.
- **Duke Energy – Sensing / Monitoring Buoys:** The Commission considered a non-project application for the temporary placement of six monitoring buoy stations across Lake Norman. Scientific sensing buoys fall outside standard no-wake regulatory rules. Commissioners discussed past boater concerns regarding unlit buoys posing nighttime navigation hazards. Based on this discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Ralston and seconded by Commissioner Mullen to support the application with the condition that all deployed buoys be illuminated for nighttime safety and hazard mitigation. The motion passed unanimously.
- **NC Wildlife Federation — Beatty's Ford Park Fish Habitat:** Commissioner Wilson presented a revised non-project use application on behalf of the NC Wildlife Federation and Lake Norman Wildlife Chapter for a 3D Exo-Form reef installation at the Beatty's Ford Park fishing pier in Lincoln County. Mr. Wilson submitted an amended layout map developed in coordination with Lincoln County and Commissioner Mullen. To avoid interfering with emergency police and fire boat access at the adjacent municipal dock, the reef was re-engineered into a staggered



layout starting 25 feet from the pier and extending out to 27 feet depth. Mr. Wilson confirmed that NC Wildlife Federation would maintain four lighted, white-flashing hazard buoys over shallow portions. Commissioner Gaskins made a motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Mullen, to submit a letter of support on behalf of the LNMC for the project detailed in the application as revised. The motion passed unanimously.

- 6. Operational Updates:** Ms. Furtado presented an operational update on behalf of Mr. Gary Mozeley, who was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Mozeley received four website service requests. In response to an inquiry made last month regarding the status of procuring emergency buoys for temporary use when other primary buoys are out of service, it was noted that there are two small no wake buoys currently in inventory that can be used for this purpose, as they do not meet minimum size specifications for permanent placement. Ms. Furtado and Mr. Loftin also provided updates on upcoming revisions to charter boat and rental boat regulations, as well as bylaws which will be incorporated into future meetings.
- 7. Adjourn.** There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Church and seconded by Commissioner Mullen. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 8:02 PM.