



Non-Motorized Boats Working Group

MEETING MINUTES

April 6, 2016, 8 am – 3 pm
Mission San Luis de Apalachee
2100 West Tennessee Street
Tallahassee, Florida

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND AGENDA REVIEW

Present:

Non-Motorized Boats Working Group Members (NMBWG): Richard Allsopp, James Barker, Gwen Beatty, Rebecca Bragg, Daniel Clark, Brice Crossley, Mike Getchell, William Griswold, James Hill, Wilbur Hugli, Peggy Phillips, Phillis Rosetti-Mercer, Tommy Thompson, and Mark Wilson

FWC Staff: Major Richard Moore, Captain Gary Klein, Captain Thomas Shipp, Lieutenant Seth Wagner, David Arnold, Precious Boatwright, Brandy Elliot, Patricia Harrell, Alex Kalfin, Jerrie Lindsey, Emily Norton, Brian Rehwinkel, and Bill Sargent

Public: Trent Anthony, Tom Butler, Oren Castille, Sandra Castille, Elliott Healy, John Lorenz, Ernie Martin, Gary Sisco, Gary Sokolow, John Veasey, Robin Rickel Vroegop, and Bruce Wright

Absent:

NMBWG: Jorge Salas

Major Richard Moore provided an overview of the purpose for the meeting and reviewed the agenda. He discussed the need to increase the occurrence of meetings as concurred by the working group's survey answers. Major Moore stated the increase would allow the NMBWG to address the topics without a loss of momentum. He thanked the attendees and introduced David Arnold and other FWC staff. Mr. Arnold reviewed the ground rules for the meeting including that no public comment would be taken at the meeting, but comments could be provided in writing or via email to Precious Boatwright.

REPORT ON SURVEY RESULTS

Bill Sargent reviewed the survey results from the Access survey. He provided an overview of the NMBWG's responses to access-related issues. A handout listing the responses was provided to the working group. The presentation is available on the NMBWG website at <http://www.myfwc.com/boating/advisory-council/nmbwg/meetings/>.

GUEST SPEAKER FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Gary Sokolow works in Access Management with the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT). He informed the NMBWG that when Boating and Waterways staff met with him, it was the first time the issue of non-motorized boat (NMB) access had been heard by DOT at the state level. The DOT is a decentralized agency with seven regions and 30 operation offices. He requested information from the DOT regions about causes for limiting access near or around bridges and highways. The feedback he received from them led him to believe the access issues experienced by NMBWG were either design related or limitations put in place to protect public safety due to vehicles parking close to the highway or erosion near bridges. Response to these issues have been handled at the local level. He felt the biggest problem with the access issue was communication.

CONFIRMATION OF MAJOR ACCESS-RELATED ISSUES, IDENTIFYING THE CAUSE OF THE ISSUES, and IDENTIFYING SOLUTIONS (These three topics are combined below.)

David Arnold reviewed and confirmed the responses provided by the NMBWG. They discussed causes and possible solutions.

Access Issues:

- Areas of access on public lands have been cut off
 - Possible Causes:
 - Possible environmental concerns
 - DOT concerns
 - Designs by DOT
 - Military concerns
 - Monetary concerns to land managers
 - Providing safe access; removing unsafe access (liability)
 - Meeting standards of American with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - Hours of Use
 - Limited use hours
 - Liability on public lands
 - Fees
 - Lack of enforcement
 - Lack of consistency
 - Possible Solutions:
 - Removal or trimming of fallen trees in the waterway to minimize obstructions and/or the need for portages
 - Increase understanding among agencies about NMBs need for access (design of facilities, parking, location away from motorized boats, floating dock design)
 - Mitigate erosion effects of dragging and launching NMBs
 - Some type of shoreline stabilization to reduce washouts and ruts
 - Improved launches designed for NMBs
 - Reasonable area to park a vehicle with or without a trailer
 - Planning for NMBs access
 - Warning buoys near designated launch points to warn other boaters
 - Access that is limited to NMBs and located in areas infrequently used by motorized boats to provide for safer separation
 - Improve ADA accessibility at facilities (We need to be more proactive on improving this area of the facilities.)
 - ADA access facilities for kayaks
- Some access points at bridges and causeways have been lost
 - Possible Causes:
 - DOT (design, restrictions)
 - Homeland security
 - Possible Solutions:
 - Increase understanding among agencies about NMBs need for access
 - Improve launch design for NMBs
 - Reasonable area to park a vehicle with or without a trailer
 - Planning for NMBs access
- Some access areas have started to charge fees
- Access points across private lands have been closed
 - Possible Causes:
 - Liability
 - Property destruction
 - Abuse of privilege (trespassing)

- Opportunity for public/private partnerships
 - Change in ownership
 - Development
 - Possible Solutions:
 - Mitigate erosion effects of dragging and launching
 - Reasonable area to park a vehicle with or without a trailer
 - Trash collection receptacles
 - Kiosks/signage to help educate the public about the waterway
 - Increase understanding among agencies about NMBs need for access
 - Planning for NMBs access
- There is not enough access
 - Possible Causes:
 - Money
 - Not enough awareness
 - More users
 - Dedicated funding source (lobbying)
 - Not enough requests for access
 - Affordability of property availability
 - Possible Solutions:
 - Increase understanding among agencies about NMBs need for access
 - Improve ADA accessibility at facilities (We need to be more proactive on improving this area of the facilities.)
 - ADA access facilities for kayaks
 - Plan to install non-motorized launch sites at current boat ramps that have many of the facilities already in place
 - Marking the mentioned site in a statewide registry so there is a centralized location where users can access accurate and up-to-date locations for access to the water
 - Kiosks/signage to help educate the public about the waterway
 - Reasonable area to park a vehicle with or without a trailer
 - Access that is limited to NMBs and located in areas infrequently used by motorized boats to provide for safer separation
 - Planning for NMBs access
- Access points are not designed for NMBs
 - Possible Causes:
 - Parking for NMBs
 - Awareness of NMBs in design
 - Lack of education
 - Sharing motorized boat facilities
 - User input
 - Possible Solutions:
 - Planning for NMBs access
 - Reasonable area to park a vehicle with or without a trailer
 - Staging area of clean grass/soft sand while preparing your boat for launching and while packing up gear at the end of the trip
 - Small grassy/sandy area to launch with some available parking within walking distance
 - Reasonable road access fishing leader disposal stations; cell phone repeater stations in vicinity of access areas/emergency phone
 - Increase understanding among agencies about NMBs need for access
 - Improved launches designed for NMBs
 - Access that is limited to NMBs and located in areas infrequently used by motorized boats to provide for safer separation

- Plan to install non-motorized launch sites at current boat ramps that have many of the facilities already in place
- Signs pointing out access points are not present
- Conflicts happen between NMBs and motorized boats
 - Possible Causes:
 - Safety concerns
 - Avoidance (bad experience)
 - Bad behavior
 - Impacts of loose vessels (beach/surf-related)
 - Possible Solutions:
 - Increase understanding among agencies about NMBs need for access
 - Planning for NMBs access
 - Access that is limited to NMBs and located in areas infrequently used by motorized boats to provide for safer separation
 - Staging area of clean grass/soft sand while preparing your boat for launching and while packing up gear at the end of the trip
 - Warning buoys near designated launch points to warn other boaters
 - In areas where NMBs and motorized boats share the waterway, signage educating people with regards to sharing of the waterway and safety on the water; dos and don'ts of the water
- Commercial NMBs treated differently than private
 - Possible Causes:
 - Limited use hours
 - Fees
 - Lack of enforcement
 - Lack of consistency
 - Outfitters can lose access where concessionaires are in place
 - Possible Solutions:
 - Increase understanding among agencies about NMBs need for access
 - Access that is limited to NMBs and located in areas infrequently used by motorized boats to provide for safer separation
- No infrastructure for NMBs
 - Possible Causes:
 - Parking capacity
 - Can lead to damage
 - Are restrooms needed
 - Are garbage receptacles needed
 - ADA compliance
 - Financial concerns
 - Not designed for NMBs
 - Possible Solutions:
 - Planning for NMBs access
 - Reasonable area to park a vehicle with or without a trailer
 - Staging area of clean grass/soft sand while preparing your boat for launching and while packing up gear at the end of the trip
 - Reasonable road access; fishing leader disposal stations; cell phone repeater stations in vicinity of access areas/emergency phone
 - Small grassy/sandy area to launch with some available parking within walking distance
 - Mitigate erosion effects of dragging and launching
 - Some type of shoreline stabilization to reduce washouts and ruts

- Trash collection receptacles
- Increase understanding among agencies about NMBs need for access
- Somewhere for people to use the restroom (other than the woods)
- Picnic pavilion/shelter
- ADA access facilities for kayaks
- Plan to install non-motorized launch sites at current boat ramps that have many of the facilities already in place
- Improved launches designed for NMBs
- Local government is not working with NMBs at times
 - Possible Causes:
 - Lack of engagement (on both sides)
 - Is ADA meeting NMBs needs
 - Possible Solutions:
 - Increase understanding among agencies about NMBs need for access
 - Planning for NMBs access
 - Improve ADA accessibility at facilities (We need to be more proactive on improving this area of the facilities.)
 - ADA access facilities for kayaks
- ADA compliant if built by government
- Liability to government

WRAP UP AND PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

The next NMBWG meeting will be held in August in Orlando. “Education/Safety” will be the next topic discussed. A survey will be sent out specifically on education/safety issues.

The meeting adjourned at 3 pm.