

LOCAL BOATING REGULATIONS

LOWER WILLAMETTE RIVER ADOPTED RULES

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Rulemaking Timeline

- June, 2019:** Due to several reports of conflict between users of the Lower Willamette River, the Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) holds two listening sessions in Portland to gather public input on potential concerns. The public is also able to provide information in an online survey.
- October, 2019:** After reviewing input gathered during the listening sessions, the Board initiates the rulemaking process for the Lower Willamette River and directs OSMB staff to convene a Rule Advisory Committee (RAC) to aid in gauging the positive and negative effects of any proposed regulations.
- November, 2019 to April, 2020:** A RAC is assembled of 22 stakeholders representing various perspectives. Two in-person meetings are held before RAC input must be solicited virtually due to the onset of the pandemic. Multiple regulatory concepts are developed for consideration by the Board, and RAC members provide their opinions on the concepts.
- May, 2020:** The Board considers the regulatory concepts reviewed by the RAC. The Board directs staff to solicit further input from the RAC regarding a concept that extends the Holgate Channel slow no-wake zone and pass-through zones north and south of Ross Island. Virtual public testimony on all Board Meeting agenda items is accepted prior to the meeting.
- July, 2020:** After reviewing feedback from RAC members, the Board directs OSMB staff to formally propose new rules to extend the Holgate Channel slow no-wake zone and that create pass-through zones to the north and the south of Ross Island. Public comment on this proposal is solicited from September 1st through October 4th. The Board also directs staff to gather information on the stretch of river between the Sellwood Bridge and Willamette Falls. Virtual public testimony on all Board Meeting agenda items is accepted prior to the meeting.
- September, 2020:** OSMB staff solicit input from state and federal agencies and local municipalities regarding the impacts of boating in the Sellwood-Bridge-to-the-Falls stretch on the river environment, water quality, public safety, and other river users. A survey is also distributed to nearly 800 boaters and riverfront homeowners to assess public opinions on boating impacts and potential boating regulations.

October, 2020: After considering received testimony, the Board votes to adopt the Holgate Channel slow no-wake zone and Ross Island pass-through zones at their quarterly Board Meeting. After reviewing materials regarding the stretch between the Sellwood Bridge and Willamette Falls, the Board also directs staff to propose additional rules. This proposal includes connecting the already-adopted pass-through zones to create one continuous seasonal pass-through zone and creating buffer zones (100 ft. slow no-wake, 200 ft. for wakeboarding and towing of inflatables) around private on-water infrastructure. Wake surfing is completely restricted in this stretch as part of this proposal. Public comment is solicited from December 1st through January 25th, and two virtual public hearings are held. Virtual public testimony on all Board Meeting agenda items is accepted prior to the meeting.

January, 2021: The Board reviews hundreds of pieces of submitted oral and written testimony, and after some deliberation, votes to adopt the proposal and end the rulemaking process. Virtual public testimony on all Board Meeting agenda items is accepted prior to the meeting. Focus is shifted towards rule implementation, education, and outreach. An overview of the adopted regulations is provided below.

Pass-through zone regulations (May 1 to September 30)

Hawthorne Bridge to Waverly Marina

- All watercraft may pass through the zones without reducing speed.
- No person shall operate a motorboat pulling a water skier, wake surfer, or towed device in these zones.
- No person shall operate a personal watercraft in continuous operation above 5 mph in these areas, except to transit directly through the zones.



Slow no-wake zone regulations

Holgate Channel and Ross Island Lagoon

- All watercraft must operate in this area at slow-no wake speed.
- This represents an extension of a previous slow-no wake zone in the Holgate Channel.



Towed watersports restrictions

Waverly Marina to Willamette Falls

- No wakesurfing permitted in this area.
- Slow no-wake within 100' of docks and other in-water structures.
- Waterskiing permitted outside of 100' from docks and other in-water structures.
- Wakeboarding and tubing permitted outside of 200' from docks and other in-water structures.

