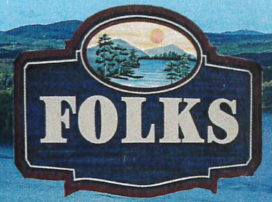


The Sentinel

Friends Of Lake Keowee Society Newsletter



March - April 2022

Governor Signs Wake Zone Bill

By Dale Wilde, FOLKS President

On March 14, 2022, Governor McMaster signed the Wake Zone Bill into law. This Bill is the cumulative result of years of legislative effort by the Senate and House. What started as Senate Bill 364 years ago and failed to pass in 2020 was taken up again and pre-filed in November of 2020 as Senate Bill 457 and House Bill 3308.

“As the primary sponsor of the Senate legislation that eventually became the Boating Safety-Wake Zone Act, I am thankful it has now become law. This law will have meaningful impacts all across our state for those who use and live on our state’s waterways including enhancing our residents use and enjoyment of Lake Keowee.”

—Senator Thomas Alexander

Throughout 2021 these two Bills struggled to pass between the two branches of legislature. Why two Bills? The Senate Bill focused on specific lakes and the House Bill focused on all the waterways. Several amendments were made to each of the Bills and what resulted after months in conference was HB 3308 that defined “wake surf” and addressed the safety issues on all waterways in South Carolina while still addressing specific lakes.

FOLKS recognizes the enormous efforts that our District 1 Senator Thomas Alexander and District 3 Senator Rex Rice put forth to work with other lawmakers to pass this important piece of boat safety legislation. As President of the Senate, Senator Alexander dedicated the time and energy to get this Bill signed into law. FOLKS also appreciates all the letters that were written and phone calls made by our members and members from lake residents around the state to legislators to support a Wake Zone Bill. This is an incremental step to overall safer boating practices.

This is the final language of the Bill that was signed by Governor McMaster.

To amend Section 50-21-10, Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, relating to definitions, so as to define “wake surf”; to amend Section 50-21-870, relating to personal watercraft safety, so as to increase distance limits between a watercraft operating in excess of idle speed upon certain waters of this state and a wharf, dock, bulkhead, or pier.

Section 1. Section 50-21-10 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding an appropriately numbered new item to read:

“() ‘Wake surf’ means to operate a vessel that is ballasted in the stern so as to create a wake that is, or is intended to be, surfed by another person.”

Section 2. Section 50-21-870(B)(6) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(6)(a) operate a personal watercraft, specialty propcraft, or vessel while upon the waters of Lake Greenwood, Lake Hartwell, Lake Jocassee, Lake Keowee, Lake Marion, Lake Monticello, Lake Murray, Lake Robinson, Lake Russell, Lake Secession, Lake Thurmond, Lake Wateree, Fishing Creek Reservoir, Parr Reservoir, or the portion of the Savannah River from the Interstate 20 Savannah River Bridge to the New Savannah River Bluff Lock and Dam in excess of idle speed within 100 feet of a wharf, dock, bulkhead, or pier or 50 feet of a moored or anchored vessel or person in the water;

(b) operate a personal watercraft, specialty propcraft, or vessel while upon the all other waters of this State in excess of idle speed within 50 feet of a moored or an anchored vessel, wharf, dock, bulkhead, pier, or a person in the water, or within 100 yards of the Atlantic Ocean coast line. The prohibitions contained in this item (6) do not apply to an unoccupied, moored vessel or watercraft or to a person behind a vessel or watercraft who is on water skis or a floating device with the permission of the operator of the vessel or watercraft;



(c) The provisions of this item do not apply to Lake Moultrie.”

Section 3. Section 50-21-870(B) of the 1976 Code is amended by adding an appropriately numbered new item to read:

“() wake surf in excess of idle speed within 200 feet of a moored vessel, wharf, dock, bulkhead, pier, or person in the water.” ❖