

Kootenai County Board of Commissioners

Gentleman;

According to a recent news item on KREM-TV, Kootenai County officials are evaluating the ordinance regarding the no wake area in scenic bay on Pend Oreille lake. County officials have offered several reasons for changing this no wake area which was established by ordinance in 1989 after public hearings. The no wake zone was established because of safety issues.

The reasons for changing the no wake zone advanced by the County include the following:

1. “Up to 20 complaints per month have been received by the County Waterways office because it takes 20 minutes to motor out to the end of the no wake zone.”

In response, The Bayview Chamber has requested public documents regarding these complaints. The response was that no records of the complaints exist. We do not know if the complainants are Idaho boaters.

2. “The cost of maintaining the no wake buoys is paid for by registered power boaters and 20 complaints per month have come from them.”

In response, There are over 800 fee paying boats moored in Scenic bay. The fees from these boats should easily support the maintenance of the buoys.

3. “There are other bays in the county that want no wake zones if Bayview has one.”

In response, each bay should be evaluated regarding traffic density and type of users. Since 1989 when the ordinance was enacted the number of boats and size has increased. Bayview has a large concentration of boats because of the rugged nature of the shoreline. Swimmers, paddle boats, kayaks, sailboats and fishermen use the bay with no fear of a fast moving boat striking them. In the summer afternoon when the sun is shining, visibility is limited because of the glare from the sun and reflections from the water. There have been very few accidents in the bay over the past 20 years with very little need for law enforcement.

4. “It takes 20 or 30 minutes to motor out past the no wake zone.”

It is less than one mile from the launch ramp to the end of the no wake zone. The speed limit is 5 miles per hour. Basic arithmetic dividing 60 minutes by 5 is 12.5 minutes.

If the 20 minutes were true, boaters that need to get to open water more quickly can use Eagle landing in Farragut Park. It costs no more if they are paying launch fees. In addition, removing the speed limit for a few boaters is like changing the 45 mph speed limit to 60 in Coeur d Alene on Highway 95 because a few motorists want to save a few minutes. Safety is the issue!

5. “The Navy opposes the no wake zone was cited in the KREM news item.”

In response, The current civilian administrator stated at a Bayview Chamber Meeting that the Navy takes no position on the issue. It does not affect their mission.

The Bayview Chamber of Commerce is strongly in favor of keeping the no wake zone as it is. Any changes could well jeopardize the near spotless safety record in Scenic Bay. This bay has a large concentration of boats because of a lack of other areas on the south end of Lake Pend Oreille suitable for moorage.

Bonner County has a larger no wake zone in the Hope area for the same reason we have one here. This lake is unique in Kootenai County because it has very little shoreline to accommodate marinas.

We respectfully ask that you give full consideration to the above while making any decision.

Thank You,

Charles Waller, Chairman of no wake zone committee
Bayview Chamber of Commerce