



MEMORANDUM

January 31, 2017

To the Florida Dragon Boat Community,

It has recently come to our attention that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission ("FWC") will be conducting meetings for the purpose of finding ways to gain revenue by imposing fees to the paddling community of Florida.

The FWC, through its Boat Advisory Council, is holding a meeting tomorrow (February 1st) in Orlando on the matter. The Council has a diverse representation of members of interest to the FWC. (<http://www.myfwc.com/boating/advisory-council/members/>)

There are different ways to collect revenue from users of "non-motorized boats" ("NMB's"). There are suggestions of permits issued to individual paddlers, as well as to boat owners.

High Five has communicated to the "Canoe and Kayak Enthusiast" representative of the Boat Advisory Council ("BAC").

First, we provided BAC with some background on our sport and events. For example:

- Participants in our sport would include those in middle and lower incomes that would be exposed to Florida's lakes and rivers where they otherwise wouldn't due to the low cost of participation in the sport. All participants at our events receive safety briefings, and wear life jackets
- Most paddlers that attend our events participate only once each year, at the event in their area
- The sport is still in its infancy in Florida; development and growth of the sport requires a substantial investment of financial resources (by us), as well as the countless contribution of volunteer resources.



We also informed the representative about some key areas of our position on the matter, which included the following:

- Participants in our sport tend to be very respectful of the environment and we do not leave any footprint on the water after our events
- Increased costs of participation would discourage such participation
- Asking for individual paddlers to show permits would be excessively bureaucratic; for example, the administrative costs of a \$4 permit would likely exceed \$4.
- Any permitting fee structure would be very hard to enforce and police due to the labor costs of doing so, leaving any voluntary system inherently unfairly distributed between those that choose to pay and those that choose to use an NMB without a permit.
- Any cost of fees imposed to us as an event operator would most certainly be passed on to the end user
- The current structure of fees that holding our events entails includes boat ramp fees, park fees, and other municipal or county fees.
- Close to all events are used by charities as fundraisers; any fees imposed would reduce proceeds that charities receive

We were informed that the voices of people in the dragon boat community should be heard, because any recommendations would affect the dragon boat community.

Information is being taken in, both before and after tomorrow's meeting. You can reach Rebecca Bragg at peacepaddler@canoeoutpost.com.

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