

Petition to regulate parking and use of the Stark Boat ramp in the City of Rivergrove
August 2020

Issue

Increasing usage of the Rivergrove Stark boat ramp by boaters, stand up paddle board users, swimmers and fishers creates conflicts among users, significantly increased traffic on a residential street in the neighborhood, and safety issues for all. At a time when COVID-19 concerns are at their highest in this state and the Governor has required all who cannot socially distance to wear masks outside and to not congregate in groups, we see boat ramp users ignoring those requirements. What occurs at the boat ramp, is a congregation of many people, not wearing masks, swimming, fishing and boating all within a narrow 20 ft. access to the river

Signed by neighbors on Dogwood, Tualamere and Marlin

The signatures below are of persons in the neighborhood directly impacted by the increased traffic and associated safety concerns. As citizens of the City of Rivergrove, we respectfully request the Mayor and City Council to address the issues of increased traffic and conflict among users of the boat ramp. We citizens are concerned about 1) the safety of our children as cars pour into the neighborhood on any given day, 2) our own health due to the lack of masks and indiscriminate use of the boat ramp, 3) the safety of the boat ramp users when conflict among uses (fishers, swimmers in the same location as boat loaders and unloaders) inevitable.

History of the Boat ramp

The boat ramp was deeded to the City of Rivergrove by Clackamas County in 1975. The Boat ramp was relatively unimproved with minor activity until the early 2000s when the ramp was identified on local river advocacy group's map.

Since that time, use has fluctuated, including some difficult years when large groups tried to access the river at the boat ramp and found no facilities and constrained access. In 2007, after a busload of elementary school kids came into the neighborhood, concerns were raised with City Council that lack of proper facilities, parking, enforcement or staff to manage the ramp created safety issues for the City of Rivergrove. Following that, council developed an ordinance regulating hours of use. As part of that action, over time City Council also

- Directed Riverkeepers to remove the boat ramp from their website, maps and other materials
- Discouraged use of the boat ramp by organizations bringing large groups to access the river via the Stark Boat ramp and
- Took down signs defining the location of the boat ramp
- Recognized multiple parks (several with river access for large and small boats) were within minutes of the Rivergrove community as sited in the City of Rivergrove Comprehensive Plan (Goal 8 pg24.)
- Funded a locked gate at the boat ramp

In 2018, after growing use and conflict at the boat ramp, several contentious public meetings on regulating use of the boat ramp were held. The resulting decision by City Council was to retain the hours of operation of the boat ramp and to provide signage defining those hours.

More Background

1)The boat ramp is a small access way to the Tualatin River directly adjacent to home-owners property lines and houses. It is the only boat ramp in the Tigard Tualatin area with property owners within 25 feet. Any noise on the ramp is amplified due to the geography and the sound bouncing off of the water and disruptive to private homeowners.

2) The Metro area has added over 100,000 residents in last 3 years. The City of Rivergrove has

grown as well adding more than 50 new housing units in the same general time frame. The result is an increase in use at the boat ramp since the deed was provided to the City of Rivergrove in 1975. This increase, while not every day, creates conflict among the various interests in the area and safety issues for the City, as folks back-up to load and unload boats while others are sitting, fishing or swimming off of the ramp.

3) The neighborhood is impacted with traffic from use of the boat ramp. The increased volume of cars and trucks poses safety issues for young children using the park. While large boats are putting in, the road is blocked as folks back up and pull forward into the park to line up onto the boat ramp.

4) If the boat ramp was owned by a private citizen and the adjacent neighbors were being impacted by noise, traffic and incompatible activities, the City would be compelled to step in or cause an action to address the issues created on that property.

5) The City does not have a parks dept, or police to manage traffic and maintain the boat ramp or to address misconduct at the boat ramp. This puts the neighbors in a situation of policing. There have been countless incidents of folks using the ramp and conflicting with private homeowners. This situation makes neighbors responsible for the use without clear guidance or authority.

6) In April 2020, the Boat ramp and adjacent park were closed due to directives by the Governor regarding safety and social distancing requirements of COVID-19 at city owned facilities. On April 22, 2020 after citizen concerns were raised, the boat ramp was re-opened with restrictions regarding the need to maintain social distancing. The temporary signage addressing these restrictions is small, difficult to read and there isn't enforcement to maintain them, putting the users and neighbors at risk.

7) Among the four nearby boat ramps providing access to the Tualatin River, the Rivergrove, Stark Boat ramp is the only one that does not prohibit fishers and swimmers in an active boat loading and unloading area.

Citizen Proposal

Boat Ramp Regulations

A. Purpose: The purpose of these boat ramp regulations is to provide public recreational access to the river for small boats, subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions. These boat ramp regulations are not intended to regulate public use of the river below the ordinary high-water line.

B. Time: Boat ramp hours of operation are: **October-May:** 9am-6pm. **June-August:** weekdays 9am-7pm, weekends 9am-7:30pm.

C. Place: For purposes of these regulations, the boat ramp includes the land area located above the ordinary high-water line. These regulations do not regulate the public's use of the river or the shoreline below the ordinary high-water line. Any use or activity on the boat ramp located within eight feet of an adjacent dwelling is prohibited.

D. Manner: For purposes of these regulations, small boats and other floating devices that are unpowered, are allowed on the boat ramp. Picnicking and camping are prohibited on the boat ramp. No minors are allowed on the boat ramp without adult supervision.

E. Parking: For the purposes of these regulations, non-residential parking shall be limited to five

marked spaces for the boat ramp.

E. Signage: These regulations shall be posted at the boat ramp, along with the non-emergency number of the Clackamas County Sherriff's office.