

Acton Action

Volume 56 Issue 2

February 2013

Dues for 2013



Dues for the upcoming sailing year are the same as last year - \$95 for a family membership. Rear Commodore Laura Beebe needs everyone to send in their dues as soon as possible so that she has time to make race committee assignments – a task that was made a little more difficult last year due to late signups.

1

Participation Encouraged



HSA is an organization that depends on member involvement to make a sailing season happen. Let your executive committee know how and where you would like to help out. Spots are open for fleet captains, membership committee, social committee Build a Barn workforce, Boat Launch in April, Junior Camp instruction, and other programs that HSA organizes and sponsors.

2

Learn to Sail



Past and future graduates of our Learn to Sail program will, beginning this year, be able to take a follow up class one on one with an HSA instructor in order to qualify for solo sailing on a club Sunfish. Details coming soon.

3

Greater than 10 Horsepower No-Wake Lake Management Proposal

- Lake users with less than 10 horsepower will continue to be able to utilize the lake as always
- Lake users with larger motors will be required to operate at no-wake speed
- No wake operation creates less wake than a watercraft with a 9.9 hp motor which may not have enough power to reach 'on plane' speeds
- Lake users with larger boats, like pontoon boats, will have the option to use a more powerful motor for better control and maneuverability in high winds and inclement weather
- Enforcement focused on boater behavior rather than motor size
- No-wake lake management very successful on other Ohio lakes

ODNR Proposal Changes Horsepower Limits

The poster you see above stood by the door as people attending the ODNR public meeting last Friday in Oxford entered the room. The ODNR held an open house to “educate” lake users and community members on a proposed lake management plan.

The plan proposes to allow boats with more than 10 horsepower engines to access Acton and Cowan Lakes provided they operate at idle or “no wake” speed. The origin of the

Continued on page 2

(Continued)

proposal is unclear, but it is the result of a survey conducted by the ODNR over the past year, according to ODNR watercraft representative Deb Green.

According to Green, the department used the results of what she called a “creel” survey in forming the proposal. This survey was apparently conducted by interviewing boaters as they entered or exited boat ramps at these two lakes.

What “CREEL” stands for as well as the spelling was not clear, as Green did not know. After looking at the ODNR website, we found that it was the name given to a survey conducted in 2012 and that it targeted fishermen. The contents of the survey are unknown since it is now closed.

The meeting was not a public speaking forum. Those who showed up simply had a opportunity to fill out a comment form about the proposal and talk to state officials. In addition to Green, two Hueston Woods representatives were there, including Mark Lockhart, Hueston Woods park manager, as well as ODNR’s state chief Roger Norcross from Columbus.

The ODNR proposes monitoring boater behavior for a one year “trial” period and relying on enforcement to curb any abuses. It was pointed out by HSA member Jackie Schriever that the many reductions in park personnel over the past few years might make enforcement difficult.

Green told us that monitoring would be by five different agencies: Preble and Butler County sheriffs, watercraft officials, state park officials, and wildlife officers.

Many of those in attendance seemed to be fisherman, although there were a number of others filling out comment forms and speaking to state representatives.

If the proposal is implemented, we could see boats on Acton and Cowan Lakes soon using unlimited horsepower engines and trying out the new “no wake” enforcement.

Norcross said that he is a former Laser sailor and that he was sympathetic to our concerns. Norcross is a Columbus resident and sailed at Hoover Reservoir there, a large lake with a 10 horsepower limit.



ODNR Proposal Needs Your Input

If you are concerned about the change from 10 horsepower to unlimited “no wake” watercraft, you can still let the state know about those concerns.



The only HSA members in attendance at the February 15 meeting in Oxford were Jackie Schriever and yours truly, so the state has not heard from many of us.

Comments about the proposal are being accepted electronically in Columbus. Send your comments to Watercraft@dnr.state.oh.us.

You can also mail comments to the ODNR at this address:

ODNR, Division of Watercraft
2045 Morse Rd.
Columbus, OH 43229



HSA Executive Committee Sets Summer Schedule

Your club executive committee, headed by new commodore Charlie DeArmon, met earlier this month and finalized the schedule for this spring, summer and fall's club activities and race calendar. Here is a brief summary of their agenda items:

Storage Shed: The projected completion is the end of March. Merv Yoder will prepare the site beginning next Thursday, February 28 and Pete Peters will talk to the park about insurance and use agreements.

HSA is looking at the possibility of writing a grant to promote racing and lake ecology with 11th Hour Racing.

This year's calendar will once again include Beach Day, InterFleet Championship Sunday, and Team Racing events.

Roger Henthorn is pursuing a regatta with Cowan Lake Sailing Club after being contacted by their club.

Don Fecher proposed a season long mentoring program for experienced and newer sailors.

Put Saturday, April 13 on your calendars as that is the date of the annual Ice Cream Social. It comes right after the committee boat launch.

The committee voted to eliminate a printed yearbook in favor of an electronic one.

www.huestonsailing.com

Editorial: Lake Management Proposal Needs Our Response

On the face of it, the new proposal seems to be harmless, one that would have little effect on how we and other wind, hand or foot powered watercraft use the lake.

I am hoping that the ODNR heard from sailors, kayakers, canoers, rowers, and other paddlers. There are a great many concerns about this proposal, not the least of which is that it could change the very character of Acton Lake for years to come.

The representatives from the State of Ohio's ODNR were helpful and informative at the public meeting, but there are real questions that go unanswered.

We don't know how or even why the survey was created and the proposal put forward except that it only wanted input from anglers. We don't know what reasons those who want unlimited horsepower offered. The only thing mentioned at the meeting by one state rep was that fishermen needed to "get around faster".

My immediate response is that on a two mile long, half mile wide lake of 600 acres, why would anyone need to "get around faster"? In fact, the great allure of lakes like ours is that life slows down a bit. It is that very peaceful, serene, unhurried quality of Acton Lake that makes it a state and public treasure.

With only two sailing lakes, Acton and Cowan, remaining in southwest Ohio that are limited to ten horsepower and therefore friendly to sailboats, kayaks, canoes, etc, I find myself somewhat angered that the State would even be considering a proposal that would virtually eliminate a recreational environment like Acton Lake from the entire region.

One official explanation was that new engine technology makes a horsepower limit obsolete and a "behavior management" policy more practical. They cite other places where it has worked.

As of the moment, I see it as encroachment on one of the last tranquil and composed natural environments in our region by engines that will potentially pollute both the water and the air with oil, noise, and congestion.