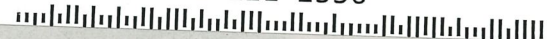




Panthers' 11-game win streak ends

SPORTS, A6

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SMITH MOUNTAIN LAKE

No bans on wakesurfing

Education cited as reason for not taking any action for a year

JASON DUNOVANT
The Roanoke Times

Smith Mountain Lake will not have any areas specifically prohibiting wakesurfing for at least another year, the Tri-County Lakes Administrative Commission decided Tuesday.

The TLAC board has placed a

moratorium on applications for no-wakesurfing zones since 2022. That year TLAC approved applications for the zones before halting them a few short months later.

At the time, the board voted on a moratorium to allow greater education efforts with the goal of curbing some of the issues created by wakesurfing. Some of the biggest concerns included large waves that could impact other boaters and/or damage docks or other structures along the shoreline.

Only one application for a no-wakesurfing zone was completed in the time it was available. The group CPT Buoys LLC consisting of multiple homeowners along the Merriman Run area of Smith Mountain Lake requested it.

The zone was approved by TLAC but later denied by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, which has the final say about any navigation markers on

Please see **WAKESURFING**, Page A2



FILE PHOTO

Smith Mountain Lake's Tri-County Lakes Administrative Commission agreed to continue a moratorium on applications for no-wakesurfing zones for at least another year on Tuesday.

Wakesurfing

From A1

the lake. VDWR later approved a more stringent, no-wake zone for that section of the lake.

Also in 2022, TLAC formed the Wake Education Task Force with the goal of encouraging wakesurfers and those participating in other towed water sports on the lake to be more courteous to others. The group has spent the past two years providing materials encouraging boaters participating in those towed sports to keep a safe distance from docks and shorelines to minimize wakes, minimize

repetitive passes, avoid coves and congested areas and avoid driving unpredictably and erratically.

The consensus at Tuesday's TLAC meeting was that those education efforts by the task force seem to be having an impact.

"It's cooled off considerably from what it was two years ago," said Randy Stow, chairman of TLAC's Navigation Committee, about public outcry concerning wakesurfing.

TLAC board member Edgar Tuck said complaints about wakesurfing seem to have declined.

"I've gotten no complaints for wakesurfing this year," Tuck said.

"I have no problems leaving the moratorium in place."

TLAC board member John Viodovich made the motion to continue the moratorium for another year. At that time the board plans to reassess the issue.

Tuesday's motion passed unanimously.

The TLAC board also voted to recommend additional warning signs around a winding, narrow section of Smith Mountain Lake known as the S-curves. The area is located along the Roanoke River arm of the lake near the Smith Mountain Lake State Park.

Three signs were placed in the area in 2006 warning boaters that

the section of the lake could be congested due to the narrow section of the lake and the amount of boats that pass through the area at busier times of the year. Those signs have deteriorated in recent years with one currently missing.

The TLAC board unanimously approved a recommendation to replace the three signs and adding two additional signs for the section of the lake warning boaters of the congested area and prohibiting towed water sports in the area.

The TLAC board also unanimously approved a recommendation for three signs along a winding section of Gills Creek that connects to the Blackwater

River arm of the lake. The board agreed the location posed a similar danger to the S-curves.

"I think this has been a long time coming," said TLAC Chairman Lorie Smith following the vote.

The recommendation for additional signage will be sent to the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources. The department has final approval on any new signage or no-wake zones on Smith Mountain Lake.

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