



Lake Norman
Marine Commission

Lake Norman Marine Commission Update to Mecklenburg County Commissioners

March 12, 2024

John Johnson, Mecklenburg County Commissioner, LNMC

Lake Norman Marine Commission



What we will cover today:

1. Review purpose of LKN Marine Commission
2. Review “new” Charter & Rental Boat Regulations
 - A. LNR23-1 – Rental Boat Regulation
 - B. LNR22-1 – Charter Boat Regulation
3. Discuss Law Enforcement support for regulations
4. Describe recent activities for algae/weed control

**Practice safe
boating**



Lake Norman Marine Commission

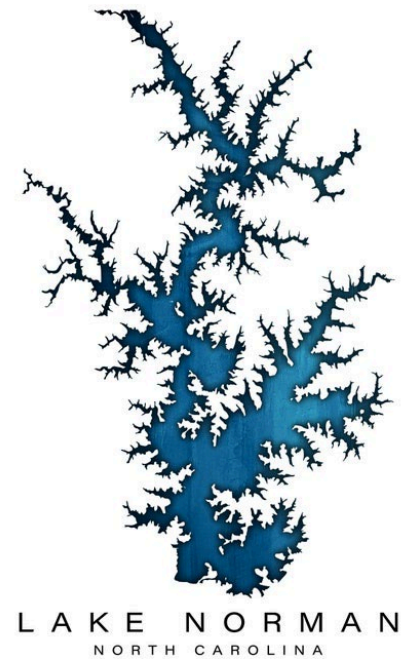
The Lake Norman Marine Commission consists of
5 Commissioners appointed by Lake Norman Counties

1. Catawba
2. Iredell
3. Lincoln
4. Mecklenburg
5. Chairman – Rotates each year between counties

As defined by the North Carolina 1969 State Statute, the LNMC is **responsible for taking appropriate responsibility for Lake Norman and its shoreline area for all matters relating to or affecting public recreation and water safety.**

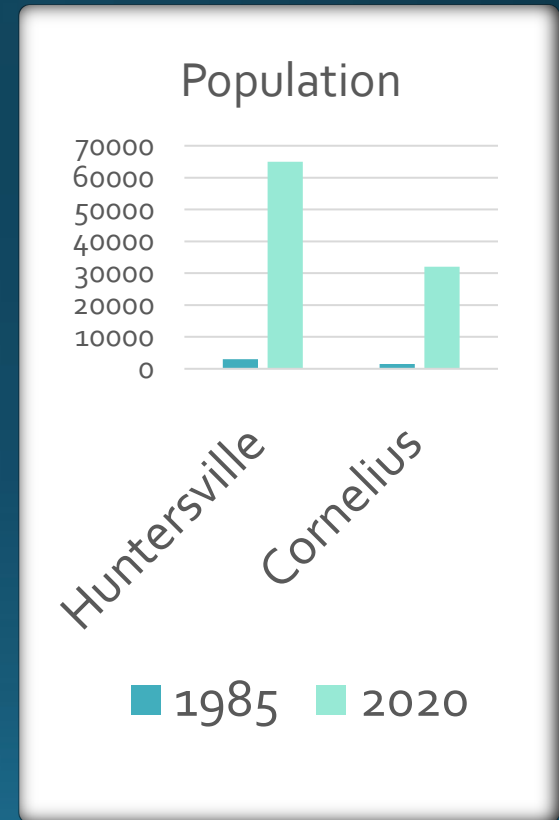
- Public Safety
- Navigational Marker System
- Boater Education
- Aquatic Plant Management Plan

Each county provides \$37,000 annually to LNMC budget of \$155K



What's Going On At Lake Norman?

- Lake Norman is the driver for economic expansion in north Mecklenburg County!
- Huntersville, Cornelius experienced a 2,000% increase in population since 1985! Huntersville: 3,000 to 61,000
- Top 4 highest-priced Mecklenburg real estate listings are on Lake Norman at \$8M to \$22M – need a lake cottage?
- Makes a \$37,000 LNMC budget sound like a pretty good investment !





Lake Norman Marine Commission Regulations

- 1969 General Assembly Act Establishing the Lake Norman Marine Commission (Chapter 1089, House Bill 1324)
 - *The Commission may make regulations applicable to Lake Norman and its shoreline area concerning all matters relating to or affecting public recreation and water safety*
 - *Violation of any regulation of the Commission commanding or prohibiting an act shall be a misdemeanor (Up to \$500 penalty)*
 - *All law enforcement officers... with territorial jurisdiction as to any part of Lake Norman or its shoreline area shall, within the limitations of their subject matter jurisdiction, have the authority of peace officers in enforcing the laws over all of Lake Norman and its shoreline area.*

Regulations?

Why Now?

- Recent “explosion” of illegal charters and boat rentals on Lake Norman
 - Serious injuries to people renting boats from companies or individuals without safety inspections, insurance, or training
 - Rental boats operated by incompetent personnel, sometimes overloaded, or without PFDs for all aboard
 - Operators providing charter trips without USCG licenses, vessel safety inspections, or insurance
 - Unlicensed charter operators allowing or promoting unsafe actions or illegal alcohol use on vessels – sometimes participating!





LKN Charter Boat & Rental Boat Regulations

- Intent of regulations is NOT to prevent charters and rentals – but to ensure they will be safe for the public!
- **3 Fundamentals to both LKN Regulations:**
 1. The boat has been inspected and is safe to use for intended purpose (Rental, Charter)
 2. The operator/renting entity has liability insurance covering the intended purpose
 3. The boat Captain/Operator is verified competent through
 - Documented operator training by renting entity
 - USCG License for charter operations
- Lake Wylie pursuing similar regulations

Lake Norman Rental Boat Regulation LNR23-1

Over half LKN fatalities related to boats for hire...

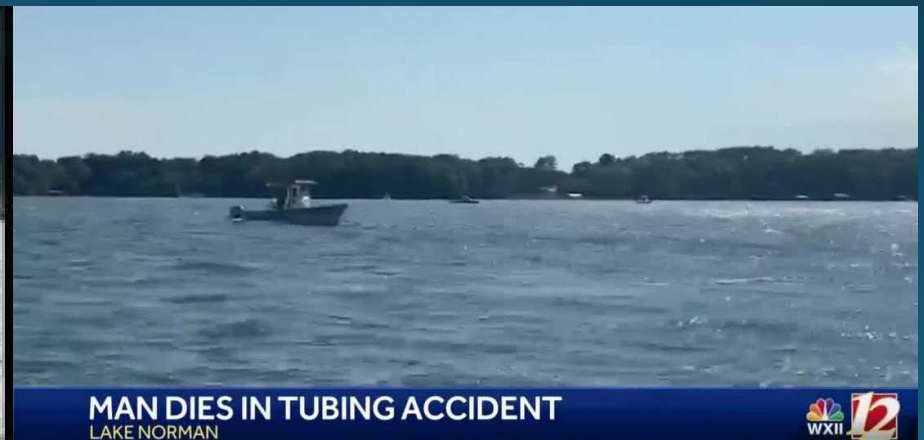
Contributing factors to LKN boating accidents:

Lack of education/training

Lack of experience operating a boat

Lack of experience/knowledge of Lake Norman

Excessive use of Alcohol



Rental Boat Regulations

Rental boat availability on Lake Norman

Established rental companies

On board with LNMC regulations

- Freedom Boat Club 😊
- Carolina Boat Rentals 😊
- Cornelius Pontoon Rentals 😊

Individuals rent via websites

Insurance, maybe no inspection or training

- Boat Setter
- Get My Boat

Short term rentals

The Wild, Wild, West!

Likely no insurance, inspection, or training

- VRBO, AirBnB – with a boat! 😞
- “Some guy” rents his boat... 😞

LNMC Rental Boat Regulations

LNR23-1 Summary

- Register with LNMC; provide proof of following:
 - Maintain minimum \$500,000 liability insurance **for boat rental**
 - Must pass safety inspection & be registered by state
- Require renter/operator is trained/qualified
 - Provide instruction on rules/regulations, boat operation
 - Provide instruction on boating on Lake Norman - No wake zones etc.
- Utilize Pre-rental checklist during rental process
 - Maintain signed copy on vessel
- Permit good for two years
- Pay \$2/vessel registration fee (covers sticker cost)
- LNMC stickers applied to each approved vessel
- Application can be made online www.lnmc.org





Charter Boat Regulation LNR22-1

- Charter Boat Regulation enacted in 2022
- Applies to *“any boat that is hired, or advertised for hire, to carry passengers who have paid a fee for services including, without limitation, sightseeing, fishing, consuming food or beverages, swimming, waterskiing, and diving... a fishing boat with 6 or fewer passengers is not a charter boat.”*
- Enforcement, penalties as required by LNMC Act
- Application available online – www.lnmc.org
- Frequently Asked Question Sheet “Is This A Charter” for clarification on when Charter Boat Regulation applies - available online

LNMC Charter Boat Requirements

- Commercial liability insurance **for charter use**
- Pass inspection by qualified inspector for more than 6 passengers
- Vessel operated by USCG licensed captain/master
- Written permission by property owner of boarding location
- Access to pump-out station for boats with on-board bathrooms
- Radar equipped if operated at night - beyond sunrise/sunset
- Display current LNMC Charter Permit Sticker



Law Enforcement on Lake Norman

- Mecklenburg County / Cornelius
- Iredell County
- Lincoln County
- Catawba County
- Wildlife NC
- **The LNMC needs support by counties to enforce LNMC regulations, encourage boater safety, and save lives!**
 - *Violation of any regulation of the Commission commanding or prohibiting an act shall be a misdemeanor ... All law enforcement officers... with territorial jurisdiction as to any part of Lake Norman or its shoreline area shall... have the authority of peace officers in enforcing the laws over all of Lake Norman*
-Chapter 1089, HB 1324
- **Training session for all 4 LEOs in April to reinforce – need “buy in” from LEOs and DAs to enforce regulations**





Recent Issue on Lake Norman Lyngbya Infestation

- Lyngbya is a mat-forming cyanobacterium (blue-green alga). It occurs in and flourishes in clean, warm water
- Not a weed! Forms smelly mats, can release toxins, may be hazard to pets
- Discovered ~10 acres - south & north LKN
- State has not declared nuisance – will happen in 2024 session but not in time...
- Treatment needs to start now! LNMC obtained estimate - \$60,000
- Requested \$10,000 from each county & stakeholders (Duke, Charlotte Water)
- Received funding, treatment contract signed 3/11/24. NC State studying now...
- **Thank you!**

Thanks!



- Copies of documents available here and online
- More info:

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Lake Norman Marine Commission Website

www.lnmc.org

- Would future, regular updates be useful?
- Love Where You Lake!

