

Guidelines for Float/Powerboat Interactions on the Snake River

The same principles involved with defensive driving on our highways also apply to boating. Please handle your craft defensively, putting neither yourself nor another boater in a risky or unsafe position. Open communication, common sense and mutual respect will go a long way toward making positive encounters. Power boaters and floaters share the Wild and Scenic Snake River in Hells Canyon. The river experience will be more enjoyable for everyone if all users treat each other with courtesy.

Wakes created by powerboats are a source of concern. One of the conditions of use on your river permit is that you obey the **NO WAKE zones within 200 feet** of developed recreation and administrative sites at Cache Creek, Dug Bar, Copper Creek, Pittsburg Landing, Kirkwood and Hells Canyon Creek. Other sites where the no wake policy should be observed are Sand Creek, Kirby Creek and Sheep Creek. Wakes can damage boats tied to rocky shores. By following some reasonable guidelines, power boaters can reduce their effects of their wakes. Through understanding how powerboats work, floaters and boats moored on river banks can avoid most wake problems and better understand the power boater's situation. Distance flattens wakes; by passing as far as possible away from other boaters, impacts can be reduced. Whenever possible, power boats should slow to no-wake speed when passing beached boats tied to the shore and certainly wherever there are boat docks.

- To be noted, sometimes it isn't always feasible for a power boater to pass other river craft at a slower speed. When a power boater comes off plane the boat's stern settles deeper in the water. A power boater produces a maximum wake when wallowing at speeds between no-wake and plane.
- When a power boater must pass closer than 75 feet to a float craft or any craft tied to the bank in rocky areas it should slow and pass at no-wake speed.
- When a powerboat is moving upstream against a moderate to fast current, it is possible to pass moored craft at a no-wake speed. If the current is moving faster than 3 or 4 MPH, slowing forces a powerboat to wallow, maximizing its wake. The only practical choice in this situation is to pass as far away as feasible on a fast plane.
- When float craft are moving downstream with a kicker or rowing, and a power boater is also moving downstream and attempting to pass slowly, the floaters should stop rowing or throttle to a minimum until the powerboat has passed. By continuing to row, the floater forces the powerboat to wallow.
- Powerboat operators are responsible for any damage caused by their wake.

Guidelines for Float and Powerboat Interaction: Generally, craft moving down stream have the right of way **EXCEPT** for boats already committed to the rapid. However, the downstream craft does not have the right to intentionally block navigation. Craft moving up stream should eddy-out when possible and let the downstream craft pass.



for the greatest good

When float craft meet powered craft and want them to pass quickly without slowing, signal them to pass by waving them on. Once a float party enters a rapid **ALL float boats in the party** should proceed especially when powered craft are waiting for them to clear.

- Power boaters must recognize that once a float boat is set up for a rapid, they are committed and cannot stop. Entering a rapid when a float boat is already committed is very dangerous.
- When more than one float party is above a rapid at the same time, the second party should wait until the first has completed their run successfully before starting through the rapid.
- Kayakers should realize that they are difficult to see when they are playing in holes.
- Folks floating in life jackets should stay next to their craft for safety purposes.
- Float groups should avoid pulling out into the midst of another passing party.
- Rafting or jetboating the rapids in Hells Canyon is not recommended for the inexperienced or poorly equipped. For floaters, portaging or lining through or around many of the rapids is difficult if not impossible.
- Boaters meeting on the river can pass on either side but normally pass to the right, just as they would on the highway. Do not pass another boat that is ahead of you, unless the boater realizes your intent.
- No boat may willfully block the channel. Both float and powered craft must avoid tying up, fishing, etc. in places where they have blocked channels or forced other craft to pass in an unsafe manner.
- Craft being passed by a planning boat should turn into the wake, catching it with their bow.
- When tying up, select a bank with a smooth surface where power boaters can pass a good distance away or where they can safely slow and pass. Sandy beaches are the best choice. It is a good idea to anchor rigid hulled craft away from the bank. This protects them from wakes and overnight CFS flow fluctuations.
- If possible, select a mooring site where you can be seen. If a powerboater can't see you until the last minute, the only choice for wake reduction is to speed up.
- Powerboaters tied in hidden locations, such as preferred fishing locations, can reduce the effect of wakes by starting their engine and powering the boats bow into a rock or boulder. The boat will pivot on its nose and water from the pump will flatten the wave.
- Powerboaters should be aware of their noise level especially related to music being played on their boats. Please respect those hours before 7 AM and in the late evening.

Ramp Etiquette: Be organized **BEFORE** you get to the ramp so your group can launch or take out quickly. Don't set up or take down your float equipment, or load and unload gear from your powerboat on a ramp if other space is available. And please, do not eat lunch on the ramp!

Please respect the rights of all other river users. A little courtesy goes a long way!