

Videos aim to help avoid conflicts on waterways

The Oregon State Marine Board has joined in a national effort to educate recreational paddlers about avoiding potentially dangerous conflicts with other watercraft around boat ramps and docks where both powered and unpowered vessels operate.

A three-episode Web TV series, made primarily at Lake Billy Chinook near Madras, demonstrates proper paddling etiquette in such areas.

“With more and more people recreating on Oregon’s waterways, it’s important that everyone recognize their own skill levels, practice the basic rules of the road and taking ownership of their own safety,” said Ashley Massey, public information officer for the Marine Board. “When one user group can empathize with the needs of another through shared responsibility, everyone can have a safe and enjoyable time on the water.”

According to the Marine Board and the U.S. Coast Guard, the increasing popularity of “paddlesports” — including kayaks and stand-up paddleboards — over the past decade has also resulted in more conflicts between those users and powered boats.

The Marine Board partnered with the American Canoe Association (ACA) to secure a grant from the Coast Guard to make the educational videos.

The three-video series can be found on PaddleTV via YouTube, among other videos



Submitted photo

Motor boats and self-propelled craft such as kayaks often use the same docks and launching sites.

geared to a wide variety of users, skill levels and paddlecraft.

“Several factors have been identified and no user group is solely to blame as we all have a responsibility to become educated and follow the rules and laws that govern multi-use waterways,” said Marcel Bieg, the ACA’s western states outreach director and grant manager, who spearheaded the video project.

“The best way to encourage safe boating and sharing the waterways is having different user groups come together to find common ground and collaborate,” Massey said. “These videos are the culmination of lots of boaters’ feedback and how to improve mixed-use interactions and etiquette and following established rules. Education goes a long way to

improve safety, and understanding, for everyone.”

PEDAL

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Opal, quartz and gold have all been sought and extracted from the vicinity.

The more recent, “shaped by fire,” aspect of this ride is the forest. With an average rainfall of less than 20 inches annually and summer lightning storms, this forest is made to burn. The trees and bushes have evolved to have environmental triggers and defenses that allow them to press their advantage over other plants fighting for water, sun and nutrients. Some examples are the western larch and ponderosa pine trees with their thick layered jigsaw bark. This bark is perfect for protecting the soft lifeblood of the tree in times of short extreme heat and fire. These trees shed their lower limbs and thrive in open dry expanses where the fire can travel through quickly, taking out the tree’s competition without damaging it.

Another technique for living in a fire regime zone is serotinous seed. Plants that deploy this manner of opposition wait for an environmental trigger, like fire, to

germinate. Pinus contorta, better known as lodgepole pine, and ceanothus, buckbrush or snowbrush, are probably the most prolific to employ this manner of survival.

In 1996, the Tower Fire was a conglomerate of three fires that merged to cover 4,800 acres, most of which can be seen in the next two days of riding. The result is the interesting layer of green lodgepole pines, all about the same age and height punctuated by the occasional towering ponderosa pine, western larch or Douglas-fir and numerous spires of trees that have been dead and preserved by fire for at least 23 years.

This ride passes remarkably fast, due to the endless beauty to stare at and the up-front elevation gain. There are the occasional cabins and marshy meadows perfect for daydreaming, and distant peaks for relief.

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