

Alcohol doesn't mix well in water of rivers, lakes

Memorial Day weekend kicked off the boating season in Oregon, and the Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) encourages those headed to the water for fun to stay sober.

"It's this simple: Boaters should refrain from consuming alcohol while on Oregon's waterways," said Ashley Massey, OSMB public affairs specialist. "Every year, a fun day on the water turns tragic because of alcohol."

According to OSMB statistics, 50 percent of boating accidents and one-third of boating fatalities in Oregon each year are alcohol-related.

Alcohol or other substances impair vision, balance, judgment and coordination and are amplified on water due to boat motion and factors such as glare, wind and sun -- increasing the likelihood of boating accidents and fatalities.

In fact, the U.S. Coast Guard says that a boat operator whose blood alcohol concentration exceeds 0.10 percent is 10 times more likely to die in a boating accident than a sober person.

In Oregon, a boater is considered legally "under the influence" with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 percent or higher. Plus, marine officers can still arrest boaters for impairment below 0.08 percent.

An impaired boat operator arrested for boating under the influence of intoxicants (BUII) in Oregon faces fines of up to \$6,250 or up to one year in jail, loss of boat operation privileges for a period of time and sus-

pension of boat registration for up to three years.

"A BUII offense is a serious violation of Oregon law," said Massey. "We have to be tough on violators to keep Oregon's waterways safe for everyone. Innocent people are usually the victims."

To avoid receiving a BUII citation and to prevent boating accidents and fatalities, OSMB offers the following tips:

*Leave alcohol at home or on the shore. Instead, take along a variety of non-alcoholic beverages.

*If you are feeling fatigued, take a break on land and return to the water when you are reenergized and alert.

*If you dock somewhere to eat and choose to drink alcohol with your meal, wait a minimum of one hour for each drink consumed before operating your watercraft.

*Being alcohol-free while onboard is the safest way to enjoy the water. Intoxicated passengers are equally at risk of injury and death.

*Operators and passengers should wear properly fitting personal flotation devices (life jackets). A full description of life jackets can be found at www.BoatOregon.com

*Take a boating safety course. In Oregon, boaters 50 and younger must carry a boater education card when operating a powerboat with a greater than 10 hp engine.

For more information about safe boating in Oregon, contact Massey at (503) 378-2623 or visit www.BoatOregon.com



Huffing, puffing and generally causing a great deal of noise, tractor trains were a valley sight for 25 years.

Powerful locomotives lumbered along in early days

Some of the steam-driven devices, with cantankerous boilers, had wheels 7 feet tall

By ROGER BRANDT
For IVN

In 1885, a new mode of transportation hissed and chugged its way onto the wagon trails of Josephine County, creating a spectacle that no doubt startled all who gazed upon it.

The confusion was understandable because the contraptions looked and sounded like steam engines, but there were no railroad tracks for many miles in any direction.

The machines that caused all the commotion were called steam tractors. And by the 1890s just about every lumber company in the region had one to pull wagons loaded with logs to their mills, and lumber to the Southern Pacific Rail-

road depot at Grants Pass.

Some of these locomotives had wheels as tall as 7 feet, and were powerful enough to pull three or four trailers loaded with wood. It is not surprising that the processions of steam tractor and its trailers were often referred to as tractor trains.

They looked and sounded as though they could explode at any second, and, under certain circumstances, an exploding boiler could be quite a realistic concern.

For example, as a steam tractor traveled uphill, the water in the boiler settled to the back of the heating tubes, which then allowed the front of the tubes to become red hot.

As the tractor went over

a ridge and started downhill, the water would run to the front of the tubes and meet with the red-hot metal. The water then flashed into steam, causing a sudden burst of pressure that could cause the boiler to explode if the pressure was not released.

The driver and his assistant no doubt spent most of their travel time watching pressure gauges.

They would want to assure that they maintained enough pressure to pull the load of logs, but not let it build up to the point that it might cost them their lives if the boiler exploded.

Steam tractors were an improvement over teams of horses or oxen, but they were not without their prob-

lems. The weight of the tractors and their loads of massive logs pounded deep ruts into the roads, sometimes getting so deep that conventional wagons with teams of horses had a difficult time traveling on them.

At one point in history the problem of road damage by tractor trains became so annoying that citizens rallied to have them outlawed. However, their practicality outweighed the problems they created.

And the chuff of the engines, straining to pull tons of timber and lumber, echoed from the slopes of Illinois Valley for more than 25 years before tractor trains were replaced by gasoline-powered semitrucks pulling trailers in the early 1900s.

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