



# TACIR

The Tennessee Advisory Commission  
on Intergovernmental Relations



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## ***MEMORANDUM***

**TO:** Commission Members

**FROM:** Cliff Lippard

Executive Director *Cliff*

**DATE:** 2 December 2021

**SUBJECT:** Public Chapter 497, Acts of 2021 (Water Recreation Resources)—Panel

According to stakeholders, there has been an increase in recreational activities on Tennessee's waterways in recent years in large part because of increased use of nonmotorized vessels such as canoes and kayaks. They agree both that this has led to congestion and access issues as well as conflicts between members of the public using the water for recreation and that there is a need for new strategies to manage these resources. The issues are complicated by the fact that Tennessee's public waterways and access to them are managed by different entities. The Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency (TWRA) regulates boat safety on all public waters in the state. TWRA also has authority over the boat access areas it owns outside state parks, while the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation has authority over access areas within state parks. Some local governments also have boat access areas they manage. In addition, federal agencies including the Tennessee Valley Authority, United States Army Corps of Engineers, and United States Forest Service, have boat access areas on their lands in the state.

If recent trends in water recreation continue, the state's existing management strategies and user fees might no longer support the maintenance of these water resources for continued public access and enjoyment. The agencies involved, at different levels of government with varying jurisdictions and regulatory authority, are beginning to modify their management strategies, including permitting, data reporting, and fee requirements. However, considering all user groups when implementing new strategies can be challenging. For example, the imposition of new fees could become a

burden for waterway users and the businesses that support them, especially if those fees result in users paying twice for the same services. To help state agencies identify the best ways to manage the state's resources given the evolving recreational use of waterways, the General Assembly passed Public Chapter 497, Acts of 2021, directing TACIR to study the effects of non-fish-and-game-related recreational activities, such as paddle boarding, canoeing, kayaking, and tubing, on Tennessee's waterways and strategies to fund, manage, and protect water and land resources affected by these activities.

Today the Commission will hear from several stakeholders about the issues affecting water recreation and Tennessee's waterways.

- Thomas Moncrief, Attorney, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
- Mike Robertson, Director of Operations, Tennessee State Parks
- David Brown, Executive Director, Tennessee Paddlesports Association
- Andrea White, Tennessee State Director, American Canoe Association
- Jane Polansky, Education and Outreach Program Manager, Harpeth Conservancy
- Mike Butler, Chief Executive Officer, Tennessee Wildlife Federation