



TACIR INSIGHT

TENNESSEE ADVISORY COMMISSION ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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MANAGING TENNESSEE'S PUBLIC WATERWAYS FOR RECREATION: BALANCING ACCESS, SAFETY, AND PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Background

Recreation on the Tennessee's waterways has been increasing. This benefits the state, but it also creates challenges for the state agencies that manage the state's waterways. Stakeholders say the increase in water recreation has resulted in user conflicts, congestion, inadequate access to waterways, safety concerns, trespassing, littering, and property damage. TACIR has released its study of the measures necessary to accommodate the evolving recreational use of the state's waterways as directed by Public Chapter 497, Acts of 2021.

Findings and Recommendations

The report recommends that the state

- gather more robust data on the recreational use of water resources across the state and use the data for strategic planning;
- continue to take a collaborative approach to strategic planning with multiple agencies and consider a statewide task force to address water recreation issues and work through conflicts, which could potentially be accomplished by augmenting the existing commercial paddlecraft advisory committee with a permanent statewide boating advisory board with representation and objectives for all affected stakeholder groups or by establishing a state office of outdoor recreation; and
- continue to develop existing and new partnerships to improve access to waterways. For example, new relationships between government agencies and nonprofit organizations that are already building and maintaining access areas and doing education and training activities could be developed, and existing partnerships could be strengthened or formalized.

Additionally, the General Assembly should add motorized and non-motorized boating to the list of subjects of which a Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission (TFWC) member should be well informed.

See TACIR's full report at the following link for additional information: <https://www.tn.gov/tacir/tacir-publications/publications-by-date.html>.