

Attention ALL boat owners:

To the good people of Alachua County:

Recently the Alachua County Commission held a meeting to discuss drafting a new county ordinance to address complaints by a small but loud minority regarding NOISE on public lakes. This ordinance is disguised as an effort to eliminate noise (mainly airboats), by placing a curfew on when boaters can be on the water. The commission can discriminate against airboats with a 2/3 majority vote. This is only the beginning, ski boats and bass boats are next.

While restricting noise may sound benign and even appear to be a good idea, this ordinance will infringe on the rights of every resident of Alachua County to use public waters. It will amount to a sacrifice by many to appease a few extremists.

Lead by a "LOUD Minority" of lake dwellers, who represent only a minority of property owners and tax payers that live on Orange lake and Lake Santa Fe and an even smaller portion of the boaters of Alachua County who visit these lakes throughout the year, the Alachua County Commission is going to draft an ordinance that will by default not allow ANY boats on ANY lake in Alachua County including your lake during evening hours. It is suggested by these small minority groups, unchallenged and even applauded by our commission that the curfew will be from 6pm to 8am EVERY day.

If you don't get involved NOW you will lose your right to early morning and late evening skiing, fishing and boating with your kids, friends and neighbors. This effort is not about noise; it is about restricting access which these small groups deem acceptable. We already have a noise ordinance which could be enforced on the individuals causing the problems. We do not need another law. Placing a curfew on the lakes as a measure to restrict noise would be like attempting to stop drunk driving by placing a curfew on our roadways. This ordinance is an unfair burden to every lawful, responsible citizen currently on the water. The county should address the individuals violating the existing noise ordinance through enforcement, NOT by denying our use of OUR public waters.

The proponents of this ordinance are well organized. We must be equally organized in order to ensure our rights. Make no mistake: the county commission is not interested in protecting your boating rights. It will take EVERYONE to speak out against this curfew.

Get more involved. Go to the meetings. Speak out. Talk to your neighbors. Let the Commission know you are not going to accept their pandering to LOUD groups who only represent a small part of our community!

For more info please contact Jerry Wetherington at jerrywl@bellsouth.net or Wally Grant at wallyg@bellsouth.net