

Boating Safety Committee Meeting

August 19th 2022

Attendance via Zoom: Bill Anderson, Bill Chamberlain, Justin Campbell, Jim Fourqurean, Evelyn Gaiser, Rafael Gonzalez-Collazo, Christopher Grayson, Alastair Harborne, Anne Sevon

Start: 2:05 pm

Alastair Harborne is now our Boating Safety Chairman!

- Jim Fourqurean – was appointed acting chair following ORED’s decision to ask Mark Butler to step down. Jim provided the committee with background on the circumstances, Mark’s decision to leave the committee, and Alastair’s appointment.

Separation of responsibilities between boating committee and FOC

- Alastair has been talking to Heather to find the best way that the FOC and BSC can work together
- We now have Jason the fleet supervisor, and now Derek as a marine mechanic within the FOC
- Boat maintenance is a safety issue, so we have that overlap with the FOC, but it is useful to think of BSC providing oversight of the FOC to ensure the boats are within the guidelines in the boating manual
- Heather & Jason have now joined the boating safety committee, but unfortunately could not join today’s meeting
- Alastair will potentially join the FOC meetings
- Various protocols (collecting boats, returning boats etc) need to be formalized and included in the manual as they are currently passed on informally among users [Update: Heather is working with the boating class to document these procedures and they will either be a standalone manual or appended to the boating manual]
- **Action item: Alastair and Annie will co-ordinate with Heather to add SOPs to the manual**

Allowing under 18s on FIU boats

- There are requests from multiple faculty to expand the boating opportunities to allow minors (under 18s) on FIU boats to let them observe research activities (e.g. often included in broader impact sections of grants)
- Former coast guard ruling did not allow minors, however that ruling changed (2018)
- ORV allows minors – it’s FIU’s (ORED’s) decision to only allow over 18s, likely because of risk analysis
- The main thing the State requires is an extra level of background clearance for whomever is working directly with these minors – this is outside of the scope of the BSC but PIs should be reminded of this requirement if working with minors on boats
- It was suggested that if these minors are dual enrolled (i.e. they are a FIU student) then they should be fine on FIU boats
- Suggested that bringing a teacher with the students (direct supervisor with the correct background clearance) can be a big help when working with minors

- NSF gives FIU money for high school / education (e.g. LTER) – we have federal funding to have them in the field (these are not FIU students) – however we have not been able to let them into the field/on boats
- We need to propose what we would like to do with Luis Salas and Alex Fals

Action items: 1) Alastair and Annie to develop a draft policy in conjunction with other faculty who would like to work with minors (e.g. Evelyn, Jennifer, and Mike Heithaus). Draft policy should use evidence of best practice elsewhere (e.g. UM has a contracted vessel, FIO & USF etc). 2) After agreement with the BSC, draft policy will be forwarded to ORED and Alastair will request a meeting to discuss policy, cost implications (e.g. extra insurance) etc. 3) Once we have a policy drafted and agreed, we would need to add the section to our manual. -

Procedures for using non-FIU Vessels

- Our manual is good for FIU vessels in Florida waters... but what about non-FIU boats, international waters, etc.? Examples include research stations, diving on commercial dive boats, hiring vessels etc.
- We don't want to stop anyone from doing research (e.g. international boat operators are unlikely to have recognized licenses but are experienced drivers) but we need verbiage – perhaps best practices – so that everyone is working within the manual and Annie has guidance for approving float plans
- Do we leave it up to the PIs to judge safety?
- We still need float plans, required safety equipment,
- Jim – one of the issues we are having is that people have great relationships with volunteers (e.g. Bonefish Tarpon and Trust) who are providing good cost-effective private boats – but this is a grey area within the manual
- **Action item: Alastair and Annie to consult with a range of users and develop guidelines for non-FIU boats under a range of potential scenarios. These can be presented to the BSC and then incorporated into the manual**

Additional fleet needs

- We need a reason to bring in new boats e.g. look at our current inventory and usage
- If people come to us as a committee pass those thoughts up
- The recharge looks at the whole inventory, so if we have more boats but they are not used the price of the boats will increase

Next Meetings!

- Near the end of the fall semester, then again in the spring
- For investigations as required
- Alastair will work with ORED to see if BSC members on 9-month contracts can be compensated for any meetings / work during the summer when boat usage is at its highest

AOB

1. Scientific Boating Safety Association?
 - a. All in favor – ORED offered to cover the cost of this (~\$75)

- b. **Update post-meeting:** There were concerns raised by Roger that being a member SBSA may require FIU to adhere to more stringent safety requirements. Subsequent discussions with SBSA by Roger and Annie suggested that these requirements are actually guidelines and therefore FIU is compliant with being a member. However, the SBSA bylaws may be updated soon and we should continue to monitor the requirements of being a member of SBSA.
2. Butler negotiated small budget for BSC
 - a. Used for restocking first aid supplies etc
 - b. Scientific Boating Safety Association membership fee
 - c. **Action item: Alastair to investigate whether we still have this budget**
3. Switching one of the vessels to OUPV instead of having an ORV designation
 - a. Quite a few in favor, just need to figure out logistics
 - b. Meet with FOC to see which vessel would be best
 - c. Transfer it over to OUPV
 - d. Not necessarily the MOCC but need to have training standardized within FIU
 - e. **Action item: Annie to generate proposal for BSC consideration**
4. Sea Tow
 - a. Some of the vessels did not have active accounts
 - i. That has been resolved
 - b. All vessels except Halophila have an account
 - c. FOC establishing protocol so accounts don't ever lapse again
5. 3 summer incidents
 - a. July 7th 2022
 - i. Jones Brothers – Drew & Yannis
 - ii. Fuel bulb issue
 - b. August 8, 2022
 - i. Halophila – Ethan, Ana & Juan
 - ii. Wiring issue, no power to engine
 - c. August 10th
 - i. Truck hit one of the trailer's coupler – Ariel Hines
 - ii. Due to limited space
 - iii. But also these crews are splitting up duties so they can leave as soon as possible
- someone should be a spotter for whomever is driving the truck
6. Reminder that RAs are employees and thus covered by workman's comp on FIU boats
7. Evelyn – we should have a field code of conduct in the boating manual e.g. NSF is going to start requiring it soon. Can use templates from FIU, neighboring universities/field stations, LTER (Annie needs to ask for this), Institute of Environment etc. The more places the verbiage is found the better. FIU code of conduct applies EVERYWHERE, including on boats, but how do we address the challenges of poor conduct by non-FIU personnel in field situations
8. Limited space at MMC for all vessels – FOC is trying to address this, but crews should be helping drivers reverse in the tight spaces
9. Regular gas is in going into the marine FOC boats at the BBC fueling area when they should be using REC90 (although some of the newer engines can use gas containing ethanol). Rafa has previously asked facilities to get a REC90 pump at MMC but to no avail. We need to tell boat

users to fill up before returning to BBC if they are working in places where REC90 is easily available (e.g. Keys). [Update: Boats being used locally should be filled at the marina near Haulover Inlet]. These changes should be captured in the SOPs in the manual and all users should be alerted when hiring a boat.

End: 3:09 pm