

## ***Suggested edits to TACIR Draft Report on Public Chapter 497, Acts of 2021 (Water Recreation Resources)***

### **Tab 6 Managing Tennessee's Public Waterways for Recreation Draft Report (tn.gov)**

#### ***Executive Summary, Page 1:***

**Summary and Recommendations:** ~~State agencies are~~ **The Tennessee General Assembly is encouraged to create an Office of Outdoor Recreation (OREC) housed in the Department of Tourist Development, gather data, develop partnerships, and collaboratively plan to manage the state's waterways across multiple governmental agencies and user groups. Additionally, the Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission (TFWC) should add a representative from commercial non-motorized vessel outfitters if TFWC plans to require fees from this constituency.**

#### ***Executive Summary, Page 11, final paragraph and bullets:***

Involving the diverse stakeholders who use Tennessee's water recreation resources directly in the planning process would likely help manage conflicts and ensure state policies better reflect evolving trends and needs in outdoor recreation. An example of potential collaboration would be the development of water trails—also known as blueways—that could provide more waterway access and economic development benefits for communities. Further, as noted above, gathering more data about all types of water recreational users could help ~~TWRA and TDEC~~ determine how to best manage Tennessee's waterways and access areas, best use the state's limited resources, and determine what new revenue sources, if any, are needed.

Tennessee needs a non-regulatory arbiter to help maximize the economic development and navigate the intergovernmental regulation imposed on these sectors of the outdoor recreation economy. A State Office of Outdoor Recreation (OREC) – housed outside the confines of TWRA or TDEC – should exist to further develop, promote, and enhance Tennessee's outdoor recreation industry by attracting outdoor recreation industries; developing the growth of new business and entrepreneurial opportunities; and marketing, advertising, and securing media opportunities that reflect the opportunities for outdoor recreation in the state. Additionally, this office would help bring together diverse user groups from across the state as a single entity to direct traffic and coordinate across public, private, and nonprofit outdoor stakeholders and regulators to grow rural communities, strengthen local economies, provide for public health, and

address emerging issues collaboratively, while creating a welcoming environment for all Tennesseans and visitors. This office – and its appointed director – should strive to adhere to the principles set forth in the Outdoor Recreation Industry Confluence Accords. For these reasons, the Commission recommends that the Tennessee General Assembly ~~that state agencies with jurisdiction over public waterways in Tennessee~~ should

- Establish a state Office of Outdoor Recreation (OREC), to be housed within the Department of Tourist Development, with an appointed Advisory Board with representation from all affected stakeholder groups.
  - Transition from the existing commercial paddlecraft advisory committee to this new Office of Outdoor Recreation with Advisory Board;
  - Consider establishing a task force to address emerging water recreation issues and work through conflicts; and
  - Allow funding from the state’s General Fund to be allocated to support training, safety and rescue on Tennessee’s waterways by NGOs as well as city and county resources.
  - 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 transitioning the existing commercial paddlecraft advisory committee to 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 non-profit 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 Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission (TFWC), which regulates commercial non-motorized vessel outfitters, should consider including a member of the commercial non-motorized vessel outfitter community.