

The Newsletter of the
Port of Pittsburgh Commission



SPECIAL ISSUE - Safe Boating Week 2024

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Ahoy! We are very excited to introduce you to this Safe Boating Special Edition of PortPitt's Newsflow to kick off the recreational boating season.

In this special issue, we feature Mike Johnson of the PA Fish and Boat Commission. Other features will include some tips for wearing your life jacket, mental health wellness programs, and boating safety. We also want to introduce you to our Youtube channel where you can learn more about what we do and about the our waterways.

With the approach of the removal of the Elizabeth Lock and Dam, the USACE has provided an update to keep boaters informed this season. Plus, there has been a change of command at the US Coast Guard MSU Pittsburgh. We will miss Commander Velez, but at the same time we want to give a warm welcome to Commander Justin Jolley.

As always, please be safe out there on the water, and enjoy this edition of the NewsFlow!

Mary Ann Bucci Executive Director, Port of Pittsburgh Commission



Venture Outdoors Receives Recognition for Promoting Mental Wellness

May is also Mental Health Awareness Month and earlier this month local non-profit and community partner Venture Outdoors received the Innovations Workplace Award by Mental Health America of Southwestern PA.

Nominated by PortPitt's Scott Harshman, who also serves on the MHA-SWPA board, this award is presented to an organization that demonstrates outstanding promotion of mental health and wellness within their workforce.

To promote mental wellness, Venture Outdoors provides their staff with a free annual Calm App subscription, 100% covered physical and mental health care benefits, mental health days, and encourages their staff to use outdoor physical movement and connection to nature to support their overall wellbeing.

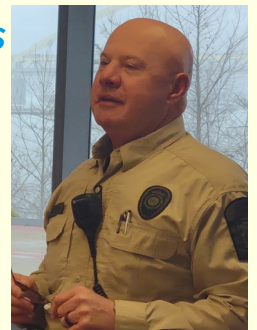
"It's very unique what they do. There's lots of literature and science-based evidence that being outside and being in nature improves mental health," said Laurie Barnett Levine, CEO of Mental Health America of Southwestern PA, during the award presentation.



3 RIVERS, 3 QUESTIONS

with *Mike Johnson*

Mike Johnson is a Waterways Conservation Officer with the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, Southwest Region.



1. Officer Johnson, tell us a little about yourself. You've had an interesting career path that's brought you to the Three Rivers! Tell us how you became an officer for the PFBC?

I arrived in the Three Rivers quite by accident, my wife and I had the opportunity to try a new area of the Country, and we chose Pittsburgh (the price of real estate was the driving factor back then). Shortly after moving here I found myself in need of employment, I had a degree in Political Science and always wanted to "Make a Difference" so I started taking a few tests for Law Enforcement positions and lo and behold the PA Fish & Boat Commission came calling.

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Pittsburgh District to demolish dam in Monongahela River after more than 100 years of navigation

By Michel Sauret, Public Affairs Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh District

PITTSBURGH – After more than 100 years of operation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh District will demolish the navigation dam near Elizabeth, Pennsylvania, to improve navigation on the Monongahela River.

The Monongahela River Locks and Dam 3 have been operating since 1907, but the facility is prone to flooding and must therefore be shut down during high-water events. Removing the dam will create a continuous pool of river-way stretching 30 miles.



District contractors will begin demolition the dam the week of July 8, 2024, using explosives to control demolition. The district will restrict navigation near Elizabeth for at least three days. Work to remove the dam entirely will continue through the end of the year.

“Our primary concern is maintaining safe navigation throughout the demolition phase,” said Steve Fritz, the district’s megaproject program manager.

Until the entire dam is removed, and until the Corps verifies the navigation channel is safe through that area, all traffic will have to continue to go through the lock.

The Pittsburgh District will begin to remove the lock chamber walls next year, which is expected to last until 2027.

Removing the dam will raise the river’s water levels by approximately two feet for communities between Elizabeth and Braddock. The river elevation will drop by approximately 3.2 feet between Elizabeth and the dam in Charleroi. The demolition will result in the pool level reaching 723.7 feet between Charleroi and Braddock.



3 Rivers, 3 Questions with Mike Johnson (cont.)

2. As an officer with the PA Fish and Boat Commission, you wear a number of hats, so to say. Describe your primary mission, and tell us something about the role which may come as surprise to our readers?

Our primary mission is to safe guard the over 86,000 miles of rivers and streams (only second to Alaska as amount of miles of water), for the residents and visitors of the Commonwealth. We also provide fishing and boating opportunities. We do this in a number of ways depending on the type and size of the waterway, it could be via large patrol boat, small jon boat, kayak or even on foot or patrol vehicle.

One thing that might surprise people, we do a lot of teaching and educational programs for children and the general public. We at the PFBC believe it is important to educate the persons who use the “Resource” and the persons who “will” use the resource.

3. With the spring comes recreational boating season on the region’s waterways. What’s your advice to new boaters, right up to the seasoned mariner?

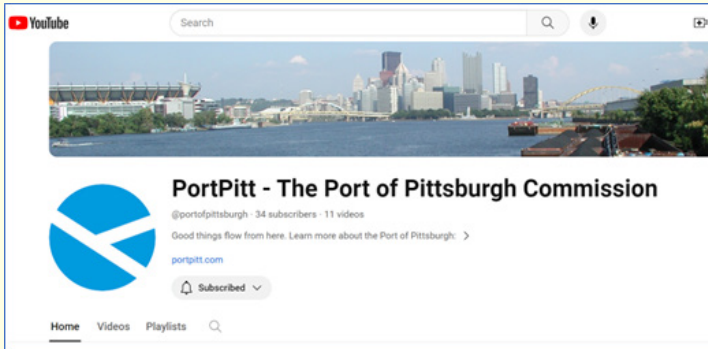
Two pieces of advice that you can’t go wrong with: **Educate** and **life jackets**, the two things that “Will” save your life.

And I am not kidding when I say that, I have investigated fatal boat accidents, I can tell with 100% certainty the more a person was educated about boating (and the area they were operating in), and wearing a life jacket, those two things did not contribute negativity to the accident.

For more information on the
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission:
www.fishandboat.com.



PortPitt Youtube channel features new informational videos



Over the past year, the Port of Pittsburgh Commission enlisted the help of a local video production company, Skene 19, to help promote the PPC’s mission and brand. Through this partnership, six promotional videos were created to help to demonstrate the mission and efforts of the Commission.

Mary Ann: “We’re extremely pleased with the efforts of Marcus, Derek, and the entire Skene 19 team! We set out to create content for digital media which will not only keep the PPC connected and accessible, but most importantly, inform the public on the importance of our rivers. I couldn’t be more pleased with the results.”

Over the past year, the Skene 19 team interviewed the PPC staff and its commissioners, toured our rivers, and filmed the region’s facilities and infrastructure to highlight the work of the PPC and its stakeholders to support our waterways. Those six videos include: “About Us & Overview”, “Barges” and “Intermodal”, “Locks and Dams”, and “Recreational Boating”.

To subscribe to the Port of Pittsburgh YouTube page, go here: <https://www.youtube.com/portofpittsburgh>

The PortPITT staff and Skene 19 are developing the next series of videos over the next few months. We invite you to share the YouTube link above via social media or by linking to your websites. Check back for new videos and content posted to the site regularly.



WEAR IT

A program of the National Safe Boating Council

USCG - MSU Pittsburgh Change of Command ceremony

On April 26th, 2024, MSU Pittsburgh held a Change of Command Ceremony at the Carnegie Science Center, in Pittsburgh, PA. Outgoing Commander Eric J. Velez relinquished his authority as Commanding Officer of MSU Pittsburgh to Commander Justin R. Jolley. Captain Heather R. Mattern, Commander of Sector Ohio Valley, presided over the ceremony. Commander William C. Albright, Commanding Officer of MSU Huntington, was the Master of Ceremony.



The Port of Pittsburgh Commission wishes to thank Cmdr. Velez for his service to the Pittsburgh region since his command began in July 2021. Best wishes to him and his family, and to his future endeavors in retirement. We also are extremely pleased for Commander Jolley’s promotion to his new post as Commanding Officer of the Pittsburgh District. He will assume the responsibilities as the officer in charge of marine inspection, federal maritime security coordinator and federal on-scene coordinator for an area covering Western Pennsylvania, Eastern Ohio and Northern West Virginia. We look forward to the continued strong partnership working with the Commander and his staff at MSU Pittsburgh.



**JOIN THE PITTSBURGH
SAFE BOATING COUNCIL!**

To inquire about joining, contact
Scott: scott@portpitt.com



GOOD THINGS FLOW FROM HERE



Help us save the US Coast Guard in Pittsburgh!



The Port of Pittsburgh Commission is requesting your assistance.

As many of you are aware, the United States Coast Guard is facing personnel challenges nationwide, and now these issues will impact the Pittsburgh region.

Marine Safety Unit Pittsburgh is facing the temporary pause in water patrol services to redistribute resources to areas deemed to have greater need. While this will not affect their landside operations, any disruption in USCG waterways coverage will impact commercial and recreational boating on our rivers, as well as the safety of events and activities held near our waterways. We have a strong working relationship with MSU Pittsburgh, as well as a great respect for their service, and the time to act to support them is now.

We ask that our region's waterways stakeholders join us by submitting public comment. A link to the Federal Register Notice has been added to this email. The full proposal to temporarily cease operations in the Pittsburgh area is detailed there. Remember, even a temporarily cessation of services has no assurance of quick resolution. Once resources are lost, there is no timetable or promise for a return. By engaging in the public comment process and requesting a public hearing, we have the opportunity to voice our concerns and ensure that decision makers understand the importance of the Coast Guard's continued current level of service.

Stakeholders are urged to submit public comments before the May 24, 2024 deadline, advocating for the preservation of inland river stations in our area.

Please submit your comments here:
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/04/26/2024-08978/operational-adjustments-resulting-from-workforce-shortages>



Know Your Buoys and Markers

CONTROLLED AREA **DANGER** **BOATS KEEP OUT** **INFORMATION**

DO NOT PASS BETWEEN SHORE & BUOY **ANCHOR BUOY** **DIVER DOWN**

Green buoys and lights should be on your starboard (right) side when traveling toward open waters (seaward).
Green buoys always have odd numbers.

Red buoys and lights should be on your starboard (right) side when traveling from open waters (shoreward).
Red buoys always have even numbers.



PITTSBURGH

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freedomboatclub.com

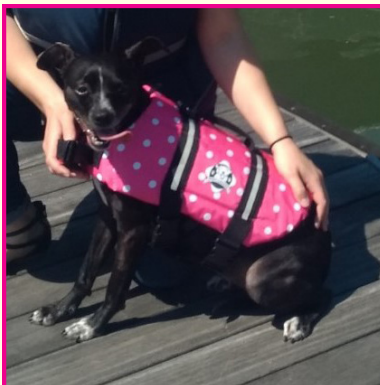


Wearing Your Life Jacket

Hello from your friends at the Port of Pittsburgh! Warm weather is upon us which means fun in the sun, time on the river, kayak adventures, and, most importantly, safety. Enjoying our waterways can be a safe and exciting activity for yourself and loved ones, but several precautions should be taken to ensure your safe enjoyment. One of the most important steps you can take for your own and your family's safety is to wear a life vest. In 2021 of all drowning deaths where lifejacket status was known, 83% of victims were not wearing a life jacket. So let's talk about how to choose and use a life jacket.

Choosing a life jacket can seem daunting, but a few key things to consider are size and certification. The US Coast Guard certifies life jackets in the United States. When purchasing or renting a life jacket, inspect it or its packaging for a certification. If it says "Not a lifesaving device," it should not be utilized. Ensure that it is the right size: a life jacket should fit snug and should not be able to be pulled up over a person's shoulders. Also ensure that the user is within the weight range specified on the device. Discard your vest and obtain a new one if the straps or buckles are broken. The same applies if the device is visibly torn. There are several types of life vest. Type 1 and Type 2 devices are designed to turn a user face up if unconscious in the water.

Putting on the life jacket is quick and easy. Pull it on as you would a jacket, closing all zippers, buckles, or fasteners. Ensure that all straps are correctly tightened. The jacket should be snug to your body but not inhibit your movement. Then with your jacket on and secure, go and enjoy the beautiful nature of our region, and spend time with loved ones knowing you've taken the needed steps for safety. Don't forget to encourage them to wear their life vest as well. Remember, that life vests also are available in sizes for the four-footed boaters, too!



HAVE THE RIGHT LIFE JACKET?



Right Style

Be sure it's U.S. Coast Guard-approved. (Check the label printed on the inside of the life jacket)



Right Fit

Snug fit and fastened. You don't want your life jacket too large or too small.



Right Care

Refer to OWNER'S MANUAL and LABEL for specific maintenance requirements.

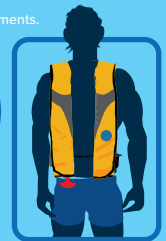
All Life Jacket Care

- Use properly
- No rips, waterlogging or mildew
- Dry after use
- Hand wash in warm, soapy water
- Store in a dry place when not boating



Inflatable Life Jacket Care

- Test: Orally inflate & holds air for 16-24 hours
- Inspect cartridge (not discharged & no corrosion)
- If it holds air, repack & use



Produced under a grant from the Sports Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.

SafeBoatingCampaign.com

Reference to any specific commercial product, process, or service, or the use of any trade, firm or corporation name is for the information and convenience of the public, and does not constitute endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Boating Safety Seven

1. Wear your life jacket
2. Take a boating safety class
3. Carry all required safety gear
4. Use your engine cut-off switch
5. File a float plan
6. Be aware of weather and water conditions
7. Boat sober, and be considerate of others



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GOOD THINGS FLOW FROM HERE

