February 2012

UPDATE ON FHL BOATING POLICIES

On the Dock:

Children 12 & under must wear lifejackets and be accompanied by a parent/guardian on the pier, floating docks, and boats at all times. Adults must wear lifejackets on the boats (both row and motor) at all times, with the exception of the R/V Centennial.

Rowboats:

Visitors no longer have autonomy, and must receive a verbal orientation before using the rowboats. This includes weekend groups, fieldtrip students, Whiteley scholars, etc. If you’re wondering whether this applies to you, the answer is YES! If not scheduled ahead of time for groups arriving after business hours or on a weekend, then rowboat use (without an orientation) is NOT permitted.

Rowboat age limits: the minimum age to checkout a rowboat without an accompanying parent/guardian is 16. Rowboat passengers under 14 years old must be accompanied by a parent/guardian (not just a user who is 16+). Exceptions may be granted when specific cases are discussed with the Boating Safety Officer (BSO).

Motorboats:

As of January 1, 2012, anyone operating FHL's motorboats is required to carry a WA State Boater Education Card in addition to the FHL motorboat course you may have already attended. You must provide us with a copy of your Boater Ed card to keep on file. Go to http://www.parks.wa.gov/boating/boatered/ for details on how to get a card. Exemptions: individuals over age 40 are exempt from needing a card in 2012. In 2013 the exemption age will be individuals over age 50, and finally in 2014 only those born before Jan 1, 1955 will be exempt.

Instead of waiting for a scheduled FHL motorboat course, we are now doing individual checkouts for those who have WA Boater Ed cards and need to operate FHL motorboats for research purposes – contact the BSO for more information. If it’s been more than 6 months since you last used an FHL motorboat, check with the BSO before your trip to see if there are any equipment updates or policy changes you need to know about.
The procedure for reserving motorboats remains the same as it has been: the reservation calendar in the sign-out shed on the dock will be used on a first-come/first-served basis. Wherever scheduling conflicts arise, priority will be given to FHL faculty, students, and staff. Any research that requires reservation of more than 5 days of boat use within a given month must be discussed with and cleared by Kristy Kull, Pema Kitaeff, or David Duggins.

If you need to gently “land” a motorboat onshore for a beach seine or sampling/collecting purposes, talk to the BSO first. Also, be aware that we now require that you “tend” the boat at all times – no walking away from a beached boat! – you’ll now need an extra person with you on these trips.

Motorboat age limits: the minimum age to get motorboat certified is 18. Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis by the BSO for younger users who have prior boating skills or experience. Passengers must be at least 6 years old and, from ages 6 - 12, be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

These policies can be found along with complete operating procedures and costs in the Friday Harbor Labs Boat Manual posted at the web address below.

Thanks,
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