

From the Mid City Messenger

<http://midcitymessenger.com/2014/11/05/bayou-st-john-boat-restriction-to-begin-soon-according-to-city-officials/>

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Boats moored along Bayou St. John now have to be moved after 24 hours (Della Hasselle, Mid-City Messenger).

Residents who have been tying their canoes, kayakers and other boats to the banks of Bayou St. John for more than a day at a time may soon want move their property, as the city is preparing to start issuing citations against the newly-banned practice.

In early September, **New Orleans City Council members prohibited the boats from being docked** for longer than 24 hours, signing into law that owners can face impoundment, fines and even property loss for breaking the rules. The ordinance, however, had gone unenforced since the law was created, according to city officials and observing Mid-City residents.

That will soon change, said Mark Jernigan, Director of the city's Department of Public Works.

"The City will install signage along Bayou St. John notifying boaters of the 24 hour restriction in the coming weeks and begin enforcement thereafter," Jernigan told Mid-City Messenger about a week ago via email.

Over the past year, Councilwoman Susan Guidry, who wrote the ordinance, said that the law is designed to protect residents from a gamut of public health threats, including disease-bearing mosquitos, snakes and the possibility of boats becoming missiles during high-wind storms.

A month ago, City Council ruled that the Mosquito Control Board has power to place stickers on the banned boats. If the boats aren't removed after two calendar days, they may then be hauled away by the New Orleans Police Department.

The initial fine for offenders is \$150, with an additional fine of \$10 for every day the boat sits in the impounding lot. The maximum fine is \$250, but the boats can be disposed of if they sit in the lot for more than five months.

"This is an ordinance that's been awhile in the making," Guidry said in September. She's previously added that she's worked for years to find an agency to take responsibility for the boats, and determine proper jurisdiction over the bayou and its banks.

Orleans Levee District officials used to take responsibility for boats left in the water by notifying owners with stickers. In 2009, they used to lock the boats in place if no action was taken.

Over the years, however, city officials determined that the boats weren't really the Orleans Levee District's responsibility, and the rules remained stagnant until now.

In December, officials told Mid-City Messenger that biggest challenge to getting the ordinance passed wasn't in finding neighborhood support, or the necessary City Council votes, but finding the proper agency to deal with the boats once the law was passed.



*Boats on Bayou St. John had been abandoned in December and were filled with stagnant water.
(Della Hasselle, Mid-City Messenger)*

Michael Martin, legislative director for Councilwoman Guidry's office, **said then that the New Orleans Police Department is too busy fighting crime to deal with hauling boats out of the bayou.**

"The administration has told us that the NOPD doesn't have the resources to have enforcement," Martin said in December.

Guidry remained persistent, though, and the Mosquito Board and NOPD apparently agreed to work together.

While the issue has been an important one for Guidry, however, differing views in Mid-City and along Bayou St. John make the new law somewhat controversial.

After the law passed, some residents celebrated Guidry's initiative — including Parkview resident and adjunct professor Susan Danielson.

"I think it's a great law," said Danielson, 66. "I think it's fabulous to use the bayou, but I want all people to have access...not for some people to claim bits and parts of it."

Others, like Austin Conn, a 27-year-old student who lives in Mid-City, see the restriction as an infringement on residents' rights.

"That's kind of lame to me," Conn said. "I'm not a fan of excessive rule-booking."