



Boat Survey Questions Answered



18 ft. bass boats with trolling motors and batteries at Heartland 10-10 Ranch

We want to thank those 220 members who completed the survey about our very special fishing club in November. You may recall that there were 10 questions. Question #9 was “If you could change one thing about the club what would it be?” The #1 response was “I want more/new lakes closer to where I live. I addressed that question in the December newsletter with a much longer response. But the short answer is that we opened 5 new lakes this week with at least one lake within 60 miles of Downtown Houston, San Antonio, Dallas and Fort Worth. More lakes are coming. Austin, we have not forgot you and we are working on 2 places in Austin.

The 2nd most common change was answered with “nothing”. So, that question is easy to answer. 15% of our members could not think of anything they would want to change. Whew!

The 4th most common concern was “We want a boat or better boats”. So, let

me address the boat issue. The boat issue is likely a bit more complicated than it may seem. Here are our current options.



Aluminum pontoon boat at Pecan Gap

- 1) 5 lakes in the club do not have a boat. 93.5% of lakes have a boat. In each case there is a reason the boat is not available. These leaves 70+ lakes with boats. If you need a boat, you have lots of options. Please don't focus on the 5 without a boat.
- 2) 6 lakes in the club have a mini pontoon boat (an upgrade from a simple jon boat) with no trolling motor or battery. (Gainesville, Cleburne, Athens MK, Cleburne, Santo Indian Cave and Bryan)
- 3) 5 Properties (11 lakes) have boats with trolling motors and batteries.

So, let me get to the heart of the question. For every 10 issues we have, 8 of them are boat related. Of those 8, most are issues with trolling motors and batteries. Folks, equipment breaks, is laborious to repair, and frankly expensive. Candidly, we don't want to be in the boat repair business, most of our landowners do not want to be in the boat repair business. But most importantly, our pricing structure does not account for us to provide anything but a simple jon boat. We made a concerted effort in 2017 and 2018 to replace worn out or missing jon boats. We replaced 14 boats in the past 2 years.

Jon boats and pontoon boats without trolling motors and batteries are a great option. These boats do not fill up with water, can be left out in most any weather condition and are just about bullet proof. While I would love to upgrade all our fleet of jon boats to mini pontoon boats (\$4000 to \$5000 each) it is not possible with our current pricing. The ROI on a mini pontoon boat, if we were to charge \$30 per day use fee, is more than 4.5 years. This ROI does not account for logistics to manage the fleet, broken seats, broken pedestals, lost rudders, anchors, and paddles. Accounting for these items would likely take the ROI out to 5.5 years. Nobody wants an ROI of 5+ years for a boat! We don't think our members would pay \$75 a day to rent a pontoon boat with no motor and battery. This is what the day fee would need to be to make an investment in pontoon boats.

While I completely agree that fishing out of a jon boat is less than ideal, our current boat situation gives you an option if you do not want to own a boat of your own. Of course, the option of fishing out of your own boat is something that is available at most lakes. Based on our reservations, about 55% of our members bring their own boat.



Standard aluminum jon boat

I realize this question was not likely the answer most of you were looking for,

but I hope it better explains the situation. I have found that transparency, however difficult it is, is usually refreshing even when you see things different. In some cases, just having a better understanding of the facts better explains why things are the way they are. Our next newsletters will address some of your other top concerns.

Sincerely,

Steve



Standard 12 ft. aluminum jon boat at Twin Lakes in Ben Wheeler, Texas

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