



Welcome and thank you for being a part of the 2024 Southport Fourth of July Red, White and Blue Freedom Flotilla on July 2nd. The Southport Fourth of July Committee sponsors the Flotilla with the Cape Fear Yacht Club (CFYC) acting as the organizing authority. We hope this year will be an enjoyable experience for you so that you will consider making your participation a tradition in the future. We also want this to be a **SAFE**, incident-free event for you and your fellow Flotilla members. We feel with an organized float plan, we can all enjoy a safe and fun event. Please take time to make sure you understand all the information in this Captain's Letter so we can make things go as smoothly as possible during the event.

Please remember, we have a float plan in place and will attempt to execute it to the best of our ability, but there will be on-the-water decisions made to allow for the various water conditions and weather. Please be patient and do not get in a hurry.

Safety First

Our goal is to have a joyous, festive occasion that is accident free and fun. Please keep in mind that the water temperature will be relatively warm, but a person overboard has dramatic current and wind conditions to be concerned about. Please make sure all crew members take special precautions not to put themselves in danger of going overboard. Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) are highly recommended for all crew and required for anyone less than 13 years of age. Please have man over-board (MOB) equipment handy and on deck. It is the captain's responsibility to brief the crew.

If this is your first time participating in a flotilla, please talk to one of the veterans here today about safety and vessel operations at slow speed. You should have a designated Forward Watch person to help you spot other vessels and navigational aids. This crewmember must be able to communicate freely with the helmsman. There are expected some small difficult to see vessels such as kayaks, skiffs, and john boats.

The weather is generally nice this time of year but can be extremely hot. The possibility for strong currents, wind and rain exists during July. We will plan for the worst and hope for the best. The Cape Fear River and the Intra-coastal Waterway (ICW) can surprise us either way. The US Coast Guard (USCG) will help us judge the weather conditions. The final weather decision will be made in coordination with the USCG. If the final decision is not to conduct the Flotilla, we will make the announcement as soon as possible. Even if the decision is to go ahead, each vessel Captain has the final call for their vessel. If you don't feel comfortable with the conditions, **DO NOT GO!** If you experience engine difficulties before the callout, **DO NOT GO!** Others will enjoy the decorations on your vessel as it remains in the harbor.

Remember, NO fireworks are allowed!

***All vessels and crew must adhere to USCG boating safety regulations, including those related to the consumption of alcohol. Please save the alcohol until after the vessel has returned to the berth and been secured.*

Flotilla Procedure and Captains' Instructions

(NOTE: ALL times are approximate and will depend on river, waterway and weather conditions the day of the Flotilla)

- 1. All vessels must monitor **USCG** Channel 16.**
- 2. All vessels must also have a working VHF radio on channel 78. Channel 78 is the Flotilla operating channel for all directions and information. CFYC Flotilla Control will be communicating Flotilla directions on Channel 78.**
- 3. CFYC control will be on station and monitoring Channel 16 and 78 near the entrance to the Old Yacht Basin (Old American Fish Deck) at approximately 2:30 PM.**
- 4. The CFYC will begin the Flotilla parade lineup at 3:40 PM at the Flotilla Start Line in the ICW near the entrance to the Old Yacht Basin (Provision Company / Old American Fish). The Flotilla parade route will be up-river from the Old Yacht Basin Start Line past the Waterfront Park and City Pier past Kingsley Park to Deep Point Marina. A mark boat will be in the general vicinity of the entrance to Deep Point Marina to help define the turning point. It will have red, white and blue streamers or windsocks to identify it. The parade route will then circle back toward Waterfront Park and Old Yacht Basin staying more mid-channel to not interfere with vessels still passing along the waterfront. The Flotilla will continue west on the ICW past Southport Morningstar Marina to the entrance of St. James Plantation Marina. A mark boat will be in the general vicinity of the entrance to St. James Plantation Marina to define the turning point. It will have red, white and blue streamers or wind socks to identify it. Some boats may decide to continue west on the ICW on their own. Boats may return to their dockage at this time if they so desire. The parade route will terminate at the entrance to St. James Plantation Marina. Vessels that are berthed there may leave the Flotilla and return to their dockage if they so desire. Remaining Flotilla vessels may continue back to their home ports and specific dockage area.**
- 5. Vessel Staging:**
 - a. The plan is to stage the vessels, but not create a difficult and demanding process. Vessels docked in the Old Yacht Basin will stage in the Old Yacht Basin and be ready to join the Flotilla at approximately 3:45 PM.**
 - b. Vessels from Southport Morningstar Marina, Indigo Marina, South Harbor Safe Marina, St James Plantation Marina, Bald Head Island Marina and other individual vessels must time their arrival to be at the Flotilla Start Line at approximately 3:45 PM.**
 - c. Once in the vicinity of the Start Line, all vessels should check-in with CFYC Control on channel 78. Vessels will be instructed to begin staging behind each other in a circular cruising pattern between the Start Line and Southport Morningstar Marina.**

- d. If we have commercial fishing vessels or the **USCG**, they will lead the Flotilla, followed by power and sailing vessels. If no commercial vessels participate, power vessels will be staged in line first followed by the sailing vessels. Kayaks, canoes and rowboats will stage in the vicinity of the entrance of the Old Yacht Basin and the ICW. Special instructions will be issued to them on an individual basis.
 - e. As vessels arrive in the staging area, CFYC Control will provide directions and Flotilla position to each vessel on Channel 78. Please follow the instructions and maintain your assigned position. The ICW will get crowded and vessel control will be important. The ICW between Southport Morningstar Marina and ICW marker 1A is a “No Wake Zone” for all pleasure boats, so please observe the no wake zone.
 - f. The Bald Head Island (BHI) Ferry operating between Deep Point Marina and BHI may pass through or close to the Flotilla between the City Pier, Kingsley Park, and Marker 18 vicinity. Please be on extra alert for the BHI Ferry in that area. The wake is significant if they do not reduce speed.
 - g. At 4:00 PM the lead vessel of the Flotilla will be given the “GO” signal to start the Flotilla parade. This year the “GO” signal will be initiated by the CFYC control boat and announced on VHF channel 78. The lead vessel, USCG or commercial fishing boat, will set the pace to accommodate the slowest vessels in the parade based on current and wind conditions.
 - h. Once the Flotilla begins, the plan is for all vessels in the Flotilla to stay on the North Side of the ICW/Cape Fear River, the port side of your vessel as you approach Southport and Waterfront Park to allow our Fourth of July visitors and guests the best view of the vessels.
6. Please leave the area in assigned order and make every effort to keep approximately 100 feet to 200 feet between vessels. All flotilla vessels must maintain the in-line, bow-to-stern formation. If you drop out or pass a vessel for any reason, inform the CFYC Control boat on Channel 78.
 7. Please follow and complete the course. All publicity for the Flotilla has offered spectators the areas from the Old Yacht Basin past Waterfront Park and City Pier just past Kingsley Park to marker 19 and return past the Old Yacht Basin to St James Plantation Marina to watch the Flotilla, so please cruise the entire route and help our spectators have an enjoyable experience.
 8. After completing the course, please return safely to your specific docking location.
 9. A special thanks to all participating Flotilla Captains and crew for making this year’s Flotilla a part of Southport’s historic waterfront heritage. The personal time, energy and effort that you expend decorating your vessels is greatly appreciated by all of us.

Thanks,
The 2024 Red, White and Blue Freedom Flotilla Committee



NC Fourth of July Red, White and Blue Freedom
Flotilla Registration Form
July 2, 2024

Please Print:

REGISTRATION MUST BE RECEIVED NLT 6 PM JUNE 28, 2024

Captain's Name: _____

Boat Name & Location: _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Sailboat Powerboat Other Type Boat _____

Boat Length: _____

- All boats of all sizes are welcome. Come join the Flotilla Tuesday July 2 at 4 PM.
- **Mandatory** Captain's meeting 10:00 AM Monday July 1st at **Morningstar Marina** 606 West St. Southport.
- All captains and crew are encouraged to dress in patriotic attire and decorate their vessels with a patriotic theme. Let your imagination be your guide.
- A few free transient slips may be available at Southport Marina if required. There will be a charge for electricity if shore power is utilized.

Participation in the N.C. 4th of July Red, White and Blue Freedom Flotilla shall be at participant's own risk. I hereby release the N.C. 4th of July Committee, City of Southport, Cape Fear Yacht Club, Officers, Agents, Employees of the aforementioned who shall not be liable for any damages arising from personal injuries or damages sustained by participant in or during his/her active or passive participation during this event. Participant assumes full responsibility for any injuries or damages, and does hereby release and discharge NC 4th of July Committee, City of Southport, Cape Fear Yacht Club, Officers, Agents and Employees of the aforementioned from any and all claims, demands, damage, rights or causes of action present or future which I may cause in any way or which may be occasioned by me or those on my vessel resulting from participation in the 2024 N.C. 4th of July Red, White and Blue Freedom Flotilla. Festival or festival's designees may use the names and likeness of the participants for promotional purposes without further compensation.

Signature _____ Date _____

To Forward Completed Entry Form:

Mail, E-Mail or hand carry to:
Woody Wilson
502 West Brunswick Street
Southport, NC 28461
910-454-4327(home) or 910-520-8858(cell)
E-Mail: wayfarer@ec.rr.com