

# WATER SPORTS

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out here for two hours than to clean my boat at home and buy fuel and everything else," Mr. Caldwell said.

Wills Caldwell, 16, likes to water ski, but had never tried it at a cable park. He liked the idea of having the jumps and obstacles in the water. "It's just like riding the flats all the time, instead of riding in a boat's wake," he said. "It'll be different."

## Blurring the lines between work and play

Mr. DiMasi, 33, said surfers in Germany started cable parks back in 1958, because there was a lack of waves that year. His first encounter with one was during childhood trips to Orlando; he was in college when he started thinking about building his own cable park.

On spring break from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, where Mr. DiMasi had started a water skiing club, he and a group



DiMasi



A wakeboarder skims over a roof-like structure while being towed by an electric motor. In the background, other skiers wait their turn.

of friends took a trip to wakeboard at the cable park in Fort Bragg, N.C. He was just as impressed as he'd been as a child. Even so, he moved to Florida after college and got a mechanical engineering job, but was laid off five years later when the company moved to Mexico.

That's when he decided to put his engineering degree to use in building a cable park with the help of partner Dayle Cartwright. In 2003, they started the lengthy

process of gaining permits and approval for the \$250,000 project. "It took longer than college," Mr. DiMasi said. "There were many, many times along the way I wanted to give up."

They initially wanted to build their park in Collier County, but officials there shot down the plan because of concerns about how much noise the cable would make — although the electric engines are actually very quiet. There was also worry about the type of crowd wakeboarding would attract, Mr. DiMasi said. "It's not Woodstock," he added. "We pride ourselves on being a family park." (Alcohol isn't allowed on the grounds).

While waiting for approval and permits for the North Fort Myers site, Mr. DiMasi learned that the cable park in Fort Bragg had closed and he could buy the old cable. He loaded it in a semi-truck and he drove it back to Fort Myers, where it was refurbished.

He plans to build a separate, straight-line cable at the north end of the lake that will only take one person at a time — good for beginners, but also for more experienced wake boarders who want to practice tricks.

Like the Arnold Toynbee quote that hangs in his office, "The supreme accomplishment is to blur the line between work and play," Mr. DiMasi has merged his love of water sports with some engineering elbow grease to create the cable park.

"It's actually a really fun job being here," he said. ■

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