

December 2020

Summary of Results of Recent Studies, Activities, and Conclusions, by the Lakes JAC

**Preface:** Over the past 2+ years (2017 thru 2020) Bella Vista lake use has increased exponentially which is evident by large increases in many types of watercraft registrations, therefore, raised the concern for consideration of additional lake use safety measures, and for causes of lake shore property damage

The Lakes Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) has listened to several concerned large lake property owners who are rightly concerned about these issues. The committee has dealt with them in a responsible, and timely manner; therefore, they will only be dealt with again if strong compelling reasons are presented.

**Objective:** Post on the POA Website for future reference to help reduce *redundant* Lake JAC considerations of lake use safety and presumed sources of lake shore property damage by present or future property owners

**Safety First:** The Lakes JAC considers lake safety use top priority; therefore, we asked the Board to approve the following new rules:

4. All watercraft are encouraged to follow a counterclockwise rotation when traversing the lakes, whether the watercraft is towing a skier or not. Similar to the rules of the road, watercraft should travel on the righthand side of the lake to avoid a head-on collision.

Change "traversing" to "cruising". Thought this wording was better

9. Motorized watercraft measuring 26 feet in length or longer, are prohibited on all POA Lakes, including the three wake lakes. Any motorized watercraft registered with the POA as of December 31, 2020 that are 26 feet in length or longer will be allowed to continue to renew their annual registration until the watercraft is sold, provided the POA annual registration never lapses.

Remove "including the three wake lakes" This rule involves all lakes and we thought this was redundant.

9. On Lake Ann, Lake Windsor, and Loch Lomond, watercraft that stop and have individuals swimming by the watercraft are encouraged to take advantage of the no-wake sections of the lakes. Swimming is discouraged in the section of the lake where water skiing and the towing of individuals is allowed, even when the swimming takes place close to a stopped watercraft.

Add "swimming is still allowed near docks or inside of the 100 ft from shore rule" to the end of the paragraph. People might misinterpret the rule to think they cannot swim near docks when people are skiing, tubing, or water surfing etc.

10. When a watercraft is towing a person or persons, the watercraft must turn left when retrieving the person or persons after they have fallen into the water. Watercraft must follow at a safe distance when following a watercraft that is towing a person or persons. Persons being towed can fall unexpectedly. Therefore, observe caution by maintaining a safe distance of at least 150 feet from the watercraft in front of you.

Replace “150 feet” with “200 feet”

### **Addressing Wake Boat Wave Issues:**

Bella Vista’s three large lake property owners have expressed concerns at Lakes JAC meetings, and to POA management, about shore and structure damage and Safety issues caused by waves generated by the less than 10 (currently) registered wake boats and associated skiers, surfers and tubers etc.; as a result, the Board has approved the following Lakes JAC recommended boating navigation rules, aids, enforcement, and maximum boat size that’s supported by the LJAC

### **New Rules**

- Identify wake boats and all boats with water ballast at the time of registration
- Recommend wake boats (all boats with ballast) be issued a separate sticker indicating that the boat can produce a wake
- Require members registering wake boats (boats with ballast) to watch POA or other industry produced safety video
- Incorporate the new 200 ft from docks and shore rule based upon the industry recommendation for water skiers or tubers as well as any water sport with someone behind the boat. (Maintain 100 ft from shore rules for all other boats operating normally.)
- Require that the wake be thrown toward the center of the lake.
- Ski, tubing, and wakeboard boats are required to operate in a counterclockwise rotation

### **Buoy’s**

- Consider placing a 200’ marker buoy off ramps at ski lakes to demonstrate distance required for wake boats, skiers, and tubers.
- Modify existing buoys to better depict what is required (no wake, no ski, danger zones) consider large colored panels and larger words on the buoys.

### **Enforcement**

- Increase ranger training and briefings so that rangers become the authority on wake boat issues and safety concerns
- Increase enforcement at key times throughout the year.

## Signage

- Develop color coded maps depicting the water activities that are prohibited in certain areas of the lakes.
- Clearly designate no wake areas, no ski, tube, or wake surfing or boarding, and all activity areas with a color-coded map of each area clearly depicted for each of the wake lakes (Loch Lomond, Windsor, and Ann)

## Limited Large Boat Size

- Motorized watercraft measuring 26 feet in length or longer, are prohibited on all POA lakes, including the three wake lakes. Any motorized watercraft registered with the POA as of December 31, 2020 that 26 feet in length or longer will be allowed to continue to renew their annual registration until the watercraft is sold, provided the POA annual registration never laps

## **Summarized Concerns of Lake Property Owners**

- Upon reviewing concerns presented at Lakes JAC meetings by lake property owners over the past 2+years regarding wake boat use:
  - 11 of the 16 seemed more concerned about large waves over-restricting recreational boating activities and wake boat use, than damage to their property
  - 5 of the 16 seemed to strongly support removing or applying more restrictive rules to wake boat use to improve safety and prevent lake shore property damage

## **Lake Shore Property Damage Factors:**

- Some Lake Property owners express other factors for the cause of lake shore property damage; however:
  1. Shore property damage and decay results from a complex interaction of:
    - a. Weather events
    - b. Forces due to steep property grades to lake walls and structures
    - c. Lack of timely maintenance to aging structures
    - d. Poor lake wall and dock construction
      - i. *Since there are no existing dock and lake wall construction standards that are enforced by the ACC, City or POA implies likely reasons for lake shore structure's untimely decay and need of repair*

## **Conclusions Summary:**

- The **Water Sports Industry association (WSIA)** provided a study that says boat wakes are not likely to be the most significant energy along shore lines and weather likely causes significant damage to sea walls
- We have strengthened rules to reduce lakeshore structure wave impact and enhance safety
- We have implemented better rules to limit the size of waves
- More lake rangers are improving compliance of rules. We have improved education with pamphlets, posters, buoys, etc.

- We need to provide areas for recreational boats and the three large lakes have enough room to host recreational boats (wake boats, cruise boats, pontoons, etc.)
- Most of our lakes are no wake, and large ones also have no wake branches providing people who choose to live or play in a more tranquil area plenty of lake area.
- The Lakes and Fisheries Division personnel and Lakes JAC members teamed up in 2019 and 2020 to study wake boat wave generation of a boat following the boating rules for each year (view the recent Wake Boat Wave Study video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdX8xVuiKMs&feature=youtu.be>).
- **As a result, the Lakes JAC has concluded:** “Waves from Wake and all other boats respectful of Bella Vista POA Boating Regulations pose an acceptable threat to lake shore property/structures, and to the safety of other lake recreation”.

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