



UPDATE FROM SAFE QUIET LAKES

Although it has been a stormy winter and many Ontario lakes are still frozen, it is never too early to start thinking about spring and summer and the joys of boating. For Safe Quiet Lakes the winter has been an opportunity to reflect on the past year and look ahead to the coming season. We are looking forward to a busy summer full of activities to engage more boaters in safer, quieter and more respectful behaviour on the water. Here's some of what we've been doing.

Lake Activity Survey Results are being shared widely:

Safe Quiet Lakes in conjunction with ERIN Research conducted the largest ever benchmarking study of Muskoka region lake activity behaviours and attitudes in the early summer of 2013. Since the publication of the [survey results](#) (in August of 2013) we have shared the report with a series of stakeholders and those meetings are continuing. For example:

- We were invited to present to the Canadian Marine Advisory Council meeting in Ottawa where the survey results generated a lot of interest from other areas of the country interested in using the same approach.
- We have also met with regional politicians and Parry Sound - Muskoka MP Tony Clement to ensure elected officials understand the concerns and issues identified in the survey.
- Members of the Safe Quiet Lakes team met with Transport Canada Assistant Deputy Minister Gerard McDonald and his senior staff to give them a full report on the survey.
- During the Toronto Boat Show the team briefed the Board of Directors of the National Marine Manufacturers Association and representatives from Water Ski and Wakeboard Canada.

If you feel there are other groups or thought leaders who would benefit from a similar briefing or who would like to carry this message to others who care about the lakes, please let us know at safequieter@gmail.com.

Reducing Boat Noise

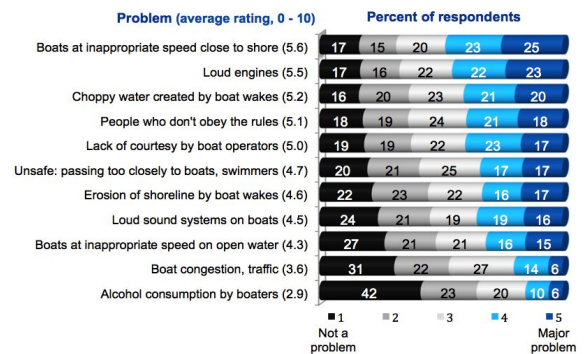
The survey respondents were strongly divided on the need for additional regulations for most issues. The only issue that has consistent support for a regulatory response is noise. Most people feel that the lakes are growing noisier and feel that there should be limits on noise. Our

7 What are the major problems?

The survey listed eleven potential concerns and asked respondents to indicate the degree to which these affected their enjoyment of the lake.

There is a wide divergence of opinion on each issue: for some it is a problem while for others it is not. An extensive set of comments later in this chapter gives definition to these summary statements.

Figure 22. To what extent do these impact your enjoyment of the lake?



new Policy and Research Committee is actively studying what other jurisdictions are doing and what options are feasible locally. Safe to say that there's lots to learn about how boat sound can be managed. Our member, Sandy Currie, a well respected member of the boating community and Moon River Cottager has posted this [Boat Sound Tutorial](#) on our website. We are planning to share more research and fact based articles over the coming months in local newspapers and on our website. Please stay tuned.

2014 – Reaching more boaters and thought leaders

Safe Quiet Lakes is well into the planning for communication and education activities in the summer months.

- We have our first “public service announcement” almost ready for TV airing. We will be posting on our site shortly – stay tuned. We look forward seeing it on local stations this summer.
- In April we plan to hold our third annual Stakeholder Meeting where we will host Transport Canada, the OPP, lake association leaders and elected officials. The meeting enables stakeholders to come together to learn more about some of the issues from experts, discuss potential solutions and network with people with shared interests in the future of our lakes.
- The Outreach Committee of Safe Quiet Lakes has more plans to reach out to lake and cottager associations, marinas and individual boaters through participation in summer events and wide distribution of our educational materials.
- We will continue to be active on Facebook and Twitter – follow us there and please share your stories and plans about best practices, news, issues and concerns on our blog at safequiet.ca.

Thank-you!

Safe Quiet Lakes is a community organization run by volunteers who are passionate about our life on the lakes and all types of boating. We are grateful to the many individuals, lake associations, elected leaders, members of the media, and boating organizations who have taken an active role in the conversation about keeping our lakes safe, quiet and sustainable. You can help by championing these ideas with your neighbours and friends and by passing on our newsletter.

As always, we look forward to your feedback at safequieter@gmail.com. If you would like to learn more, become more involved, make a donation or share a boating story, please visit <http://safequiet.ca>.

Survey reveals top concerns of lake users

By Corey Wilkinson
Safe Quiet Lakes recently released the findings of their comprehensive lake activity survey conducted by ERIN Research Inc.

About 2,300 people responded to the survey which asked many questions about how people make use of the lakes in Muskoka.

"We are thrilled that so many lake users responded to the survey and shared their opinions about boating and life near the water," says Frances Carmichael, the founder of Safe Quiet Lakes.

Of respondents, 51 per cent come from the three large lakes, Joseph, Muskoka and Rosseau. While the remaining 49 per cent represented those living on smaller lakes and on the shore.

Safe Quiet Lakes is a volunteer initiative dedicated to making the Muskoka region's lakes and rivers as safe and quiet as cottages and boaters wish them to be. Safe Quiet Lakes is funded and supported by the lake associations, individuals and townshipship to support Cottages.

Nearly four per cent of all the respondents were cottage owners or family members. Of those, 24 per cent were from water access only properties and 69 per cent have been in the area for 20 or more years.

According to the results, paddling, swimming and power boating remain the most popular water activities.

Respondents also identified several areas of concern. The most commonly cited problems on the lakes are watercraft going too fast, too close to shore, large boat wakes, excessive noise and inconsiderate boating.

Respondents from the regional lakes were



Sandy Currie and Frances Carmichael, from Safe Quiet Lakes, Alice Murphy, mayor of Muskoka Lakes, OPP Staff Sgt. Ron Campbell, and District Coun. Scott Young reveal the new Boater's Code in Muskoka Lakes Township.

asked to comment on the level of boat traffic on their lake or river. The southern portion of Lake Rosseau was deemed the busiest, followed by the Moon River and the western portion of Lake Joseph.

Comments from study participants found that personal watercraft and wake boats were, by a large margin, causing most of the problems. Inappropriate speed, too close shore was the number one major problem on the lakes cited by 48 per cent of respondents, while alcohol consumption

by boaters was found to be the least of the major concerns with only 16 per cent believing it to be a problem.

"The results of this survey will help guide discussions about ways to speed officials, law enforcement professionals, mariner manufacturers and the lake users can work together to enjoy the lakes today and preserve them for future generations," says Terry Chizzaro, MP for Terry Stuuks-Muskoka.

MPP for Terry Stuuks-Muskoka, Norm Miller also commented on the results of the survey.

"Whether you are a boat operator, passenger, resident, cottager or tourist, enjoying a safe day on our waterways is everyone's responsibility. If we consider and respect each other, we can make a difference," says Miller.

Muskoka lake associations participated in the study and the results of the survey are supported by both the Township of Muskoka Lakes and Empire Township.

"The survey is extremely helpful to us as we understand the broader issues," says Alice Murphy, mayor of the Township of Muskoka Lakes.

The survey will be made available online and to local municipalities, municipalities, the public and law enforcement organizations.

"I applaud the initiative of this group. The survey is useful to law enforcement," says Ron Campbell, a staff sergeant with West York's South OVI's which is responsible for patrolling the northern end of Lake Rosseau. "This enforcement alone will not be successful, public education is key."

The results of the survey are available at www.safequiet.ca.

35
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