

Safe Quiet Lakes

2018 Stakeholder Meeting “Turning Insights into Actions”

**Stakeholder Meeting - April 6, 2018 – 9:30 am to 12 pm
At Port Carling Community Centre**

Meeting Notes

The Safe Quiet Lakes annual community engagement meeting brings together leaders in the boating industry, cottage associations and government. It is a unique opportunity to talk about solutions to common concerns with leaders of boating and community organizations in the Muskoka Region.

Attendees:

	2018	2017
Lake Association Executives	28	24
Elected Officials and Staff	11	9
Volunteers and General Public	9	8
Marina Owners and Staff	4	6
Ontario Provincial Police	3	4
Leaders of Boating and Safety Organizations	6	2
Safe Quiet Lakes Board Members	5	9
Media	1	1
Resort Owners and Staff	0	1
Donors	0	2
Real Estates and Rental Agents	1	
	68	66

Distributed to Attendees - attached

- Agenda
- Brief for Group Discussions

Presenters:

Frances Carmichael, Chair, Safe Quiet Lakes
Tony Clement – MP Parry Sound Muskoka
Norm Miller – MPP Parry Sound Muskoka
Kasia Seydegart & George Spears, ERIN Research
Greg Wilkinson, Director - Safe Quiet Lakes
Sgt Steve Mihills, Central Region SAVE
Sgt Todd Selvage, Bracebridge Detachment
Michael Michalski - Limnologist /Senior Adviser, Michalski Nielsen Associates
Craig Hamilton, Master Instructor, Water Safety Consultant, BoaterSkills.ca
Rick Layzell, CEO, Boating Ontario
Discussion Moderator: Greg Wilkinson, Director - Safe Quiet Lakes

1. Welcome & Introductions

Frances welcomed the group and introduced the senior government officials attending: Steve Clement, Norm Miller, John Klink, Bruce Gibbon. This support is very important to us. The Safe Quiet Lakes video was shown.

2. Opening Remarks from Tony Clement and Norm Miller

Expressed their support for what this organization is doing and the importance of talking together to achieve solutions.

3. Survey 2017 Highlights

Greg Wilkinson introduced the goals of the survey and the response received. George Spears reviewed results in several areas using PPT slides: Perceived change since 2013; The 5 drivers of enjoyment on the lakes: Safety, Noise, Boat Traffic, Power Boat Activities; Respondents' ranking of safety concerns; Comparisons of perceptions in paddlers and tow boat users: overlaps and differences; Boaters attitudes to education, regulation and enforcement; Ranking of various proposals to enhance the boating experience.

In summary: The top two drivers of enjoyment of the Muskoka Lakes/rivers are safety and quiet. This is what the more than 3,200 people who participated in the 2017 survey conducted by ERIN Research, for Safe Quiet Lakes told us. The research shows that safety and quiet have a strong impact on enjoyment of the lakes for all types of boaters.

4. Safe Quiet Lakes Update

Greg Wilkinson thanked our sponsors and donors including in particular: the MLA, Gordon Bay Marine and Jayne's Cottages, Seguin Township and the Lake Joseph North Association. Greg thanked the members of the Advisory Council.

Using a PPT, Greg reviewed our program and highlighted some of the results of the 2017 summer; Talked about our winter work including the organizations and town councils where we have presented the survey results; gave an overview of our strategy renewal in response to the survey; And lastly a list of suggestions of what stakeholders can do.

5. OPP Perspective on Marine Policing - Resolution of complaints

Sgt Steve Mihills spoke about the OPP strategy for policing the lakes: being at the right place at the right time, working to use resources strategically. If we hear about problems we want to be ready to adapt to address. Working with neighbouring detachments towards borderless policing. They are always looking for ways to speak to and work with the community.

Sgt Selvage of the S.A.V.E. team introduced Darren DeVos who handles complaints in the Bracebridge detachment. They gave some statistics from last summer:

3700 Vessel checks

550 marine related charges

120 Marine related complaints/calls for service

Talked about spreading the message on how to register a concern or complaint in a way that the OPP can investigate effectively. They need details: vessel ID, special details, description of the driver, location, time of incident. Gave an example of how the details help and talked about how they follow-up. Maybe not today but they do take note and work to resolve. The complainant may not know when or if the complaint is resolved.

They took questions from the audience & there was discussion on each.

- Q: mandatory PFD's?
If it were up to us everyone would wear PFD's
- Q: how many report noise as a problem?
Noted that boats checked last summer in response to complaints were found to be in compliance. Not all noisy boats are illegal. 8 noise complaints last year. Comments from marina owner that the number of large through-hull boats seems to be declining. None stored now in his facility.
- Q: about stopping Poker Run – bane of a lot of cottagers?

They work with the event to speak to the owners and check for compliance. Suggestion to broadcast the poker run timing to warn people to stay off the lake during the event.

There was discussion on creating how to communicate concerns and complaint materials on the Safe Quiet website and agreement to follow-up on this.

6. Panel Presentations

a) **On Boating Impact Studies and Recreational Carrying Capacity**

Michael Michalski reviewed the concepts of Recreational Carrying Capacity (RCC) and Boating Impact Studies (BIS). These metrics are used in some municipal official plans as a way to determine whether there is stress caused by development near a particular water body. In brief:

- RCC uses a guideline of 1.6 hectares of surface water per cottage. Seguin Township uses this as a hard cap on further development. The Seguin RCC does not refer to boating but to quality of enjoyment and has been upheld on appeal to the OMB.
- BIS involve a physical count of boating activity, at various times in a particular area, such as a busy bay. This count is multiplied by the number of square meters of water each activity needs to operate without stress. The product of this multiplication is related to the surface area available.
- The Township of Muskoka Lakes can ask for a BIS as part of any development approval process.

He gave details of how these metrics are calculated and examples of how they have been used over the years.

b) **Slow Down, Bow Down - Preventing Wakes**

Craig Hamilton, presented the “Slow Down, Bow Down” campaign which educates boaters on maintaining a slow, bow-down aspect when operating in no-wake zones to prevent wakes. When slowing down, boaters should throttle down to idle for 10 seconds, before continuing ahead.

A handout was distributed with information about the campaign. The images shown are available for use (logo-free) for you to add your logo. Please contact craig@boaterskills.ca for free copies or see the article in Boats and Places (<http://www.boatsandplaces.com/slow-down-bow-down/>).

c) **Educating the New Owner**

Rick Layzell began by reviewing the membership and focus of Boating Ontario. He then reviewed market conditions:

- Boat sales figures for Ontario (2016 vs 2015: PWC's up over 32%, inboard ski/wakeboard boats down 16% and stern drive boats down 11%)
- Changing consumer habits: in store shopping decreased, fuel sales lower.

Boating Ontario delivers boating education messages through the Discover Boating program (<http://www.discoverboating.ca>). This is a national public awareness effort managed by the [National Marine Manufacturers Association \(NMMA\)](#) on behalf of the North American recreational boating industry. It also has new boater information, a section on boating etiquette and an [app](#) to use while out on the water. He also spoke about how boat dealers and marinas educate their customers including most dealerships offer on water training at retail delivery.

6. Turning Insights into Actions - Group Discussions

Participants were divided into seven groups for discussion on three topics outlined in the “Brief for Discussion Groups” which was distributed and reviewed. A volunteer leader and note taker were assigned to each group.

Topics were:

- # 1 Is the 9km speed limit effective? Providing safety? Reducing wakes?
What is the alternative?**
- # 2 Should a Recreational Carrying Capacity (RCC) limit be in Official Plans?
Should Boating Impact Studies be required for large developments?**
- # 3 What can be done to improve complaint resolution?**

After 30 minutes, the discussion leader of each group presented a summary.

7. Major Takeaways

- # 1 There are various reasons why posting a speed limit sign of 9-10 km/hr may not be effective. We need to amplify the message:**
 - “Bow down, slow down”. A majority of participants strongly supported this messaging.
 - Install digital speed feedback signs at key points on lakes as boaters often don’t know how fast they are travelling
 - Education initiatives: Inform people about the negative impacts of wakes, Hard for boaters to know distance from shore, need to understand how different boats move in the water. 360 degree awareness.
 - What about instituting “No Wake”, “No Passing”, “Dead Slow” Zones but beware the clutter of signs...
 - Education for human powered craft (paddlers, swimmers) on staying safe – not putting themselves & others in a bad situation.
- # 2 Municipalities should use metrics to review capacity for boating on their lakes when considering additional development**
 - Participants had varying views on this.

- Many felt that this is a useful metric/standard to evaluate all new developments in the Muskoka region.
- Individual cottages are held to high standards when it comes to making changes. These should apply to commercial zones.

3 What should you do if you have a boating complaint (not an emergency):

- If it's practical, speak respectfully with the boater or cottage owner, and/or report the matter to your cottage association for effective strategic action
- Record the details: take photos, video, write down boat number, driver description, boat features, date, time, location
- Report details to the OPP at *OPP or [1 888 310-1122](tel:18883101122)
- OPP and Safe Quiet Lakes to work on an online reporting tool to help people make legitimate complaints with the right information to help the OPP.
- Think about ways to loop back when complaints are closed.

8. Partner and participate

The meeting wrapped up with thank you to all participants. It was great to come together to hear the diversity of views and to learn from each other. These are the keys to turning these insights into action. Have a safe fun boating season!!