

OUR MISSION: Make the Muskoka lakes safer and quieter to ensure the sustainable enjoyment of a treasured shared resource



Summer 2018 - Newsletter

Getting the Word Out

Chair's Message

Safe Quiet Lakes continues to expand its influence. We have forged strong relationships with municipalities, lake associations, industry associations, local businesses and individuals. These relationships are vital to encouraging safe and responsible boating.

Our primary focus is on education and dialogue. Over 72% of the 3,300 survey responders agreed that there is a need for more boating education. The survey results give us clear guidance on the issues that are important to you and this has formed the basis of our new education messaging.

In 2018, we put new initiatives in place including: "The Bow Down, Slow Down", a campaign to decrease wakes as boats slow down, a new boaters' card for renters, and a postcard reminder of the 30 meters from shore speed limit. We were very active presenting the survey results to municipal governments, and industry leaders and communicating your concerns to these groups.

Based on the survey, we know that there is strong support for new boating regulations. This year we have begun to work on a program to advocate for new regulations on wakes too close to shore. Response to our 2017 survey indicated that wakes, from many sources, are a major and dramatically growing concern. And, this concern is echoed by the people we talk to at the various AGMs and boat shows. A new approach to reduce wakes will not be quickly achieved and a potential solution can take several different forms. We will work with stakeholders to strike the right balance and to develop the most effective approach. However, we are committed to working with the lake community to achieve positive change.

Our activities are not possible without financial support from individuals, lake associations, municipalities and our sponsors. **Please support our efforts. For more information and to make your gift online please click safequiet.ca/donate-now.**

As always, we are very interested in your comments and feedback. Your interest, support and participation are so very important to us. I can be reached at chair@safequiet.ca.

Frances Carmichael
Chair, Safe Quiet Lakes

Choosing policies that promote sustainable development of our lakes

During this fall's municipal elections, Safe Quiet Lakes will encourage debate on sustainable development policies that sustain safe and responsible boating. However we will not be endorsing specific candidates.

We believe that Recreational Carrying Capacity (RCC) is one such policy tool. RCC is a way to determine how much development, and the associated boat traffic, can increase before recreational enjoyment of a lake deteriorates. Generally this is expressed as a ratio of “number of cottages” to “lake surface area”. Seguin Township is the only township in our area that uses this thoughtful tool as a brake on over development. In Seguin the ratio is “1 cottage” to “1.6 hectares of lake surface”. Recently, this was applied in the township to restrict development on Oastler Lake, and Seguin’s ruling was upheld by the OMB.

We believe, that other townships and the District should embrace RCC as a planning tool and a way to objectively quantify and put the brakes on overdevelopment. There are a number of ways that RCC can be adapted to be effective. There is no perfect formula but the concept is an effective way to bring the lake loading perspective into the planning dialogue.

Boating Impact Studies (BIS) are also an important planning tool. These studies relate current boating activity to the available surface water area. The studies are used to determine whether additional boating activity, caused by development, would result in unsafe or undesirable conditions.

We believe that the adoption of RCC and BIS should be an issue that candidates should respond to in the upcoming municipal elections, and be embraced in official plans. Ask your candidates for their stance on this important issue. Let them know how you feel and give us your feedback as well. Your vote and feedback are important.

Celebrating the MLA History of Boating Safety

Safe Quiet Lakes would like to extend congratulations to the Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) for its leadership in Boating safety on the occasion of its 125th Anniversary.

As early as 1905, the MLA recognized the need for uniform summer water levels, navigation markers and night- time navigation lights for the increasing boat traffic. The first 50 navigation markers were installed in 1923 and the next 100 in 1924 and the system was turned over to Federal Government in 1947. The MLA has had a permanent representative on Federal recreational boating committees since then. These buoys form the basis for today’s navigation charts.

In 1929 MLA persuaded the Federal Government to declare the Muskoka Lakes a “harbour” thus requiring boats to have night time running lights. The local MP took exception to this intrusion into his riding and after acrimonious debate in the House of Commons, the initiative was rescinded. It was many years until night time running lights became mandatory.

In the 70’s, using procedures within The Canada Shipping act, Barry Graham MLA Commodore and chair of Safe and Recreation worked thru red tape in 8 months to get new regulations on key Muskoka navigational waters. These new rules, primarily about speed too close to shore, came into effect in October 1976 and are still in effect today. Below are photos of two signs from that era.

It is important to acknowledge the role and vision of Nancy Barber in the mid-80’s, who along with former President Joan Booth, conceived the need for and developed a boating safety program after several serious accidents occurred on the Muskoka Lakes. The award-winning MLA Marine Team served as safe boating ambassadors, both on the water and on land at municipal docks and public events until 2012.

In 2011, the MLA was a founding partner in Safe Quiet Lakes and a major contributor to our success.

For more on the history of the MLA click [here](#). You can see these original signs and more at the MLA’s Exhibit at the [Muskoka Steamships and Discovery Centre](#)

BOATING REGULATIONS IN MUSKOKA

SPEED

LAKES – JOSEPH, ROSSEAU, MIRROR, MUSKOKA
9 Km/Hr. Limit - when within 30 meters of shore, dock, pier, raft, float or any other vessel under way or anchored.

RIVERS – JOSEPH, INDIAN RIVERS
9 Km/Hr. Limit - when within 30 meters of shore, dock, pier, raft, float or any other vessel under way or anchored.

SHADOW RIVER – 9 Km/Hr. Limit
MUSKOKA RIVER – 25 Km/Hr. Limit

North Branch	Bracebridge Falls to mouth of river.
South Branch	Intersection to Muskoka Falls.

WATERSKIING/SURFBOARDING AND THE LIKE – PROHIBITED

On JOSEPH RIVER
SHADOW RIVER
INDIAN RIVER (except Mirror Lake)

MUSKOKA RIVER
– North Branch
– South Branch

THIS SUMMARY OF BOATING RESTRICTION REGULATIONS, TAKEN FROM CANADA GAZETTE. CONSULT FULL REGULATIONS FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

PROVIDED THROUGH COURTESY OF

 MUSKOKA LAKES ASSOCIATION

GET THE PICTURE

9 KM /HR limit when within 30 metres
of  or  or  or any other  ...moving or otherwise.

NO  or  on any river.

9 KM /HR limit on Joseph, Indian & Shadow Rivers.

25 KM /HR limit on North & South branch of Muskoka River

 MUSKOKA LAKES ASSOCIATION P.O. Box 298, Port Carling Ontario, P0B 1J0 705/765-5723

Speed limits on Muskoka waters... important details and differences

Generally in Ontario, there is a 10 km/hr speed limit within 30 meters of shore. Few people seem aware that there are some important differences for Muskoka.



Firstly, on Lake Muskoka, Lake Rosseau, Little Lake Joseph, and Lake Joseph the speed limit is 9 km/hr and secondly, this speed applies to within, a raft, dock, pier, another boat whether anchored or underway, as well as from shore. For other water bodies in Ontario, the speed limit is simply from shore.

Another important difference is the 9km/hr limit also applies to all of the Joe River, the Indian River (including Mirror Lake) and parts of the Muskoka River such as the part that joins Mary and Fairy Lake. Tow sports are also expressly prohibited on these rivers.

This protects swimmers and other boaters and reduces shoreline damage.

These regulations are Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations (VORR), established under the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 (CSA 2001) and allow any level of government to ask the federal government to restrict the use boats, on a body of water. For these regulations and others that might apply to your lake (eg. Kahshe, Blackstone, Healey) go to <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2008-120/page-1.html>.

Update to the Small Vessel Regulations that could affect you:

PaddleCanada's [website](#) has a summary of the recent changes to safety requirements for various paddle sports. Including: "Stand Up Paddleboards (SUP) used for navigation fall into the same category as canoes, kayaks, rowboats, rowing shells, and other human powered boats less than 6m and you are required to carry mandatory safety equipment under the Small Vessel Regulations.

- Option 1: WEAR a lifejacket with a whistle (no buoyant heaving line required).
- Option 2: CARRY a lifejacket on board with whistle and a buoyant heaving line.
- Option 3: NONE then could receive a \$200 – \$500 fine for non-compliance."

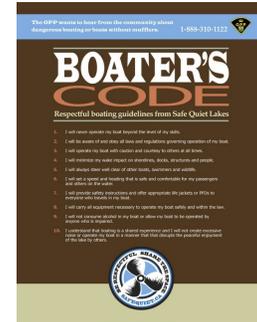
There are several other recent changes to the Small Vessel Regulations. For a full list of safety equipment required in your boat download the Canadian Safe Boating Council's [Boat Notes App](#) or check their [website](#).

Report boating too close to shore, wakes, noise or other safety issues? Call 1-888-310-1122

The OPP want to hear from the community about dangerous boating and boats without mufflers

Gather as much information as possible by taking detailed notes or video including: boat registration number, colour, make, model, time, frequency and location of incident and a description of the operator.

Call 911 if it's an emergency.



Join us at the Stewardship Seguin Speaker Series



Join our chair, Frances Carmichael, for an in depth look at our 2017 Survey Results, the issues and opportunities. She will explore how each of us can be a respectful boater and answer your questions.

Thursday August 23rd, 7pm

at the

Orville Community Centre in Seguin

[Check the Seguin website](#) for more information.

Add Your Support to our Fundraising Campaign

Over the past seven years **Safe Quiet Lakes** has been building support from individuals and organizations such as yourself across our community.

The funds that **Safe Quiet Lakes** receives from Muskoka area residents are used to create informational videos and maintain our website, print Boater's Code signs and cards, attend lake association annual general meetings and events of interest to boaters and residents.

Please support our efforts with a gift of \$25 to \$500 online at safequiet.ca/donate-now or by mailing a cheque with a completed [donation form](#) to: Safe Quiet Lakes, P.O. Box358, Rosseau, ON, P0C 1J0.



About Safe Quiet Lakes

Safe Quiet Lakes is a not-for-profit community group of boaters that promote safe, respectful boating.

For more information or to get involved visit safequiet.ca



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