

safe Quiet Lakes

2019 Stakeholder Meeting

Theme: “What others are doing ... Sharing learning and best practices”

April 12th, 2019 – 12:30 pm to 4:30 pm
At Port Carling Community Centre

Meeting Notes

The Safe Quiet Lakes annual stakeholder’s meeting brings together leaders in the boating industry, cottage and lake associations, government, and concerned citizens. It’s an opportunity to talk about solutions to problems and concerns and ways to make our boating community better.

Attendees:

	2019	2018
Lake Association Executives	22	28
Elected Officials and Staff	12	11
Volunteers and General Public	16	9
Marina Owners and Staff	7	4
Ontario Provincial Police	3	3
Leaders of Boating and Safety Organizations	8	6
Safe Quiet Lakes Board Members	7	5
Media	0	1
Resort Owners and Staff	0	0
Donors	0	0
Real Estate and Rental Agents	0	1
	75	68

Distributed to Attendees – attached

- Agenda
- Brief of Group Discussions

Presenters

Frances Carmichael, Chair, Safe Quiet Lakes
Tony Clement – MP Parry Sound Muskoka
Norm Miller – MPP Parry Sound Muskoka
Greg Wilkinson, Director, Safe Quiet Lakes

Sgt. Dave Moffatt, Provincial Marine Coordinator, Highway Safety Division, OPP
Sara Anghel, President, National Marine Manufacturers Association
Dawn Callan, PaddleSmart Program and National Paddling Week Co-ordinator
Dawn Colquhoun, Manager, Office of Boating Safety Transport Canada
Michael Clarke, Board Member, Loon and Turtle Cottagers Association

1. Welcome & Introductions

Frances Carmichael, Chair, Safe Quiet Lakes

Frances welcomed the group. She thanked the organisers and the Board and introduced the attending government officials and municipal politicians. Their support is very important to us.

She also introduced the new staff member for Safe Quiet Lakes, Aaron Rusak, Administrative and Outreach Coordinator and board member Greg Wilkinson as the presenter of the afternoon's program.

2. Opening Remarks

Greg invited Tony Clement MP Parry Sound Muskoka and Norm Miller, MPP Parry Sound Muskoka to make opening remarks. They expressed support for Safe Quiet Lakes and the work that the organization does. They stressed the importance of talking together to discuss solutions to common problems.

3. Safe Quiet Lakes Update

Greg Wilkinson, Director, Safe Quiet Lakes

Greg Wilkinson began by thanking our sponsors and donors and especially the MLA.

He then gave an update on Safe Quiet Lakes' activities over the past year beginning with a review of the survey findings from 2017. These demonstrate the correlations between enjoyment of the lakes and safety, noise, and boat traffic.

He presented the new education messages on speed, wakes and reporting incidents developed as a result of comments at last year's stakeholder meeting. He also reviewed the advocacy priorities of the board including: no wake zones, decibel limits on mufflers, use of lake load tools for land planning assessments, and, to continue to call for enforcement of existing laws and regulations.

Greg also presented highlights of results of the MLA's fall members survey showing boat noise and shoreline density are issues for over 60% of respondents.

He shared preliminary results from the MLA speed radar at the Ames Narrows of the Joseph River. The average speed of the over 7,400 vessels was 18 km/hr and the maximum speed was 62 km/hr.

He also shared some results of the 2018 FOCA Member Survey results. Boating issues ranked in the top 6 for most lake associations surveyed.

Safe Quiet Lakes will continue to provide tools to all stakeholders to help them promote safer and quieter boating and to engage their members in this conversation.

4. Marine Policing & Resolution of Complaints

Sgt. Dave Moffatt, Provincial Marine Coordinator, Highway Safety Division, OPP

Sgt Dave Moffatt gave an overview of the OPP Marine program in Ontario, how they are organised, what equipment they have, and their major activities. He recognized that more education is necessary and is the cornerstone of a strong program.

He also previewed the 'Think Before you Sink' campaign that is planned to be released around May 24th.

The High Falls tragedy was discussed. The ruling in this case confirmed that a canoe is a vessel and operators can be charged with impaired operation.

Sgt. Moffatt also explained how the OPP plan their on water enforcement; balancing factors such as complaints, officer experience, visibility and access. He encouraged everyone to report incidents and help enforcement to be deployed where it is needed most. The slide "As a Community Member – What to do!" was handed out to all attendees and will be available on the safequiet.ca.

Sgt Moffatt introduced Jason Bradley of the Bracebridge detachment.

5. Trends in the Boating Industry

Sara Anghel, President, National Marine Manufacturers Association

Sara Anghel, began by introducing the NMMA and provided an overview of recent sales statistics for the Canadian and Ontario markets. Numbers increased overall in 2018. Ontario is currently responsible for about half of all recreational boat sales in Canada.

Sara Anghel promoted some of the online safety and education tools that are available for the public from the NMMA and the WSIA.

She then spoke about the NMMA's involvement in two industry policy forums: The National Recreational Boating Advisory Council (NRBAC) provides advice to Transport Canada on recreational boating issues; and the International Council of Marina Industry Associations (ICOMIA). Sara Anghel is currently serving on the board of this UK based international organization.

She then reviewed two areas ICOMIA is working on:

- How to create a safe boating environment?
- Sound emissions from boating

The ICOMIA has a technical committee that monitors the effects of underwater noise on the environment and develops methods of sound level compliance testing.

She stated that the NMMA is committed to working with Transport Canada and all stakeholders to advance solutions in this area that are technologically feasible and do not disrupt the manufacturing process.

As NMMA does some lobbying, a question was asked regarding what are their top issues. Sara said that currently the number one issue is the tariffs on US imported boats. A lot of work is being devoted to this issue. In response to a question on the current legislation for mufflers, Sgt Dave Moffat provided a slide with text from the Small Vessel Regulations. There was discussion on the difficulty of enforcing this regulation.

6. Safety Messaging for Paddle Sports & Program Update

Dawn Callan, PaddleSmart Program and National Paddling Week Co-ordinator

Dawn Callan offered an update on Paddle Canada activities and the PaddleSmart program through AdventureSmart. They offer courses that are taught by member instructors, volunteers and through partnerships with community groups and other safety & boating organizations. Paddlesmart has been a terrifically successful outreach and media campaign, but they're still looking for additional reach. PaddleSmart is always looking for volunteers and leaders to assist with their goal. Please be in touch to book a presentation to your group or if you would like to be a volunteer.

She also talked about a series of videos promoting safe paddling, made in partnership with Blue Ant Media and other resources available on the PaddleSmart and AdventureSmart websites.

She introduced PaddleCanada's newest initiative: Adaptive and Abilities Committee. Coming online in 2019 and based on criteria established by the American Canoe Association, this program aims to provide resources for people with physical or cognitive restrictions to learn how to boat safely.

Following her presentation, there was a discussion on life jackets and how recent changes to the standards and the design mean there are more options than ever. There was a suggestion that a fun way to get this message across is to host a lifejacket fashion show.

7. The VORR Process

Dawn Colquhoun, Manager, Office of Boating Safety Transport Canada

Dawn Colquhoun began by introducing her colleague, Anje Madej, who will be taking over the VORR file in the weeks to come.

She then gave an overview of the current consultations being undertaken by Transport Canada entitled "Lets Talk Transportation". Items currently under review include: new options for PDF's and alternatives for flares. Check online for more information including the ability to comment. The deadline is May 17th.

She then discussed the types of VORRs (Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations) and how to get one established. She noted there were 331 VORRs already in effect in Ontario. The most well-known VORR is the 9 km rule in Muskoka, which supersedes the 10/30 universal speed restriction. Not only is the speed different for the Muskoka VORR but also it also restricts speed in certain rivers and near other objects in the water including boats, docks and markers.

The steps to apply for a VORR include: proving that there is no other option to mitigate a safety concern, that you've held public consultations, and examined the costs and benefits. There's also a legal duty to consult the Indigenous people. Applications are submitted by the local municipality. The municipality must ensure an enforcement regime is in place, that appropriate signage is erected and that the public is informed. Applications are accepted annually and submitted to the Treasury Board for approval on September 15th. Many more details are available online and in various publications. Please contact them

In response to a question, she advised that a VORR can be removed through the same process and can take just as long to get approved.

She brought along handouts on the process.

8. Loon & Turtle Cottage Association – Water Safety Awareness Committee

Michael Clarke, Board Member, Loon and Turtle Cottagers Association

Michael Clarke talked about the recent program that Loon and Turtle Lake launched to help increase boating safety. Because the lakes are long and narrow, they felt they suffer from different problems than other lakes. They began, in spring 2018, with a survey of their membership to understand these concerns. The questions were based on the questions in the Safe Quiet Lakes survey.

Based on their results, they developed a communications plan for the website, their social media, and their newsletter. Additionally, they installed road signage to help promote boating safety. There were eleven signs put out and they focused on showing ideas, not just telling. They received a lot of positive feedback on this project, as well as thoughts and ideas on how to carry it forward for 2019.

9. Group Discussion Summary

Participants were divided into seven groups for discussion on three topics outlined in the “Brief for Discussion Groups” which was distributed and reviewed. Each group was assigned a volunteer leader and elected a note taker from among their members. After 45 minutes, each of the groups presented a summary of their discussion.

Below are highlights from the discussion.

Question 1: Do you think the OPP and SQL are effective and having an impact on safe and responsible boating? What would make them more effective?

Overall, comments were positive and they are both seen as effective. Suggestions and comments include:

- An increased online presence would be beneficial to getting more and younger people engaged.
- Make people aware of enforcement activities, fines, and how to report
- Increasing visibility through partnerships and pro-active presence
- Increase requirements for reporting & tracking Incidents by the OPP
- OPP should focus on high priority offenders and not the small items,
- OPP should continue pro-active presence at association meetings and on the water.
- Safe Quiet Lakes should focus on positive messaging, need to get to younger generations engaged, effective use of social media. What does success look like?
- Safe Quiet Lakes should host additional community events in the summer, like safe water days, to promote good boating practices on the lakes.

Question 2: The National Recreational Boating Advisory Council provides advice to Transport Canada. What are the top two regulatory items that the NRBAC should be considering?

The two items most groups thought would be good to consider is on water testing for PCOCs and decibel limits for all boat engines. Other suggestions and comments include:

- Boating licenses are much too easy to acquire and don't require any on-water experience or training.
- Decibel regulations were highly supported by several discussion groups. This includes decibel limits on lakes as well as regulations on above board motors.
- Make PFD's mandatory on all vessels under 6m
- Get rid of near shore speed limit and replace with no-wake zones
- More restrictions for renters. As the sharing economy grows this will be more of an issue.
- A comprehensive review of existing legislation can help fix holes in both acquiring boating licenses and other issues such as no wake zones and rules regarding personal watercraft and other vessels.
- Decibel levels on mufflers capped as in EU
- Regulate sound systems as a distraction to boat drivers

Question 3: What can you do to promote boating safety? What would be the most and least effective ways you can shift boaters' on water behaviour to encourage them to operate their boats more respectfully?

Several potential new ideas were discussed, with an emphasis on education including:

- Signage on roads, like the ones shown by Loon & Turtle Lake, would be very effective in educating cottagers who may not be attending community events or meetings.
- Another cottage association has superimposed a 30-meter line on their lake's map, to show how far out the line is. Doing this on a larger scale would help illustrate the rules regarding speed.
- Most discussion groups also agreed that educating youth and getting them interested in safe boating would help promote good boating habits. Suggestion to offer youth training concurrently with association AGM's.
- Promotion of SQL's message was also identified to be necessary. That means potentially a toolkit for cottage associations and more materials going out to partners.
- Host a celebrity lifejacket challenge to time how long it takes to put on a life jacket in the water (like the ice bucket challenge), or a life jacket fashion show

- Work with local municipality to offer boating safety courses and to help distribute safety info, local media events

10. Wrap-Up

Greg wrapped up the meeting with a review of Safe Quiet Lake's plans for the summer and the announcement of a new award. This award will recognize an individual or group who is contributing to safe and responsible boating and helping to make our lakes safer and quieter.

The meeting concluded with a thank you to all participants, partners and donors.

Learning about and discussing boating safety with all our partners was a huge success. Discussion is a key part of creating change and coming up with new ideas.

Have a safe, fun boating season!