

Town of Land O'Lakes Survey Questions Concerning Wake Enhanced Watercraft

Recreational boating activities continue to expand with new ideas and technological advances. Examples include the development of powerful motors that enable high-speed water skiing and tubing, the development of water-jet propulsion spawning the popularity of personal-water craft, and battery powered hydrofoil boards.

The popularity of boats that generate large wakes for activities such as wake boarding and wake surfing is rapidly increasing. Wake enhanced watercraft are boats designed or equipped to produce wave like wakes that are three or more feet high a short distance behind the boat. Normally powered by large motors the wakes are maximized by operating at relatively slow speeds in a bow-high configuration.

Residents owning lakeshore property and others who engage in recreational water based activities are increasingly concerned that large wakes produced by “wake boats” impair the health, safety, and welfare of the general public.

The use of wake enhanced watercraft for wakeboarding and wake surfing is increasing on area lakes. The Town Board and Plan Commission have been made aware of concerns associated with the increased use of this type of watercraft. The Plan Commission is considering whether there is a need to develop a local ordinance to address these concerns including public safety, damage to property and impacts to the natural environment.

Wisconsin state law provides cities, villages, and towns with the authority to develop local ordinances to regulate watercraft uses and activities. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and counties do not currently have the authority to regulate the use of wake enhanced watercraft. Additionally, the state constitution provides that cities, villages, and towns may not prohibit the use of watercraft based solely on the type of watercraft.

Responses to the following questions will help the Plan Commission determine whether a new ordinance is needed and if so, what the ordinance should include. Copies of the survey are available on the Town website, <https://landolakeswi.gov>. Paper copies of the survey are also available at the Land O'Lakes Town Hall and at the Land O'Lakes Public Library.

1.) Are you familiar with wake enhanced watercraft and/or wake boarding and wake surfing?

Yes ____ No ____

2.) Have you observed or participated in wake boarding or wake surfing?

Yes ____ No ____

3.) Which of the following types of damage or safety issues associated with wake enhanced watercraft are you concerned with (Mark all that apply):

- ☐ Shoreline erosion; banks & vegetation.
- ☐ Increased turbidity / reduced water clarity.
- ☐ Safety of others on the water (e.g., kayaking, swimming, paddle boarding, etc.).
- ☐ Disruption of other activities (e.g., fishing, boating, enjoying the outdoors, etc.).
- ☐ Disruption of wildlife (e.g., loons, aquatic vegetation, aquatic birds, fish, etc.).
- ☐ Risk of introduction of AIS – via water in ballast tanks.
- ☐ Damage to docks and/or boats.
- ☐ Noise.
- ☐ None of the above.

4.) What conditions should an ordinance include for regulating the use of wake enhanced watercraft? (Mark all items that apply)

- ☐ Minimum Lake Size
- ☐ Minimum Lake Depth
- ☐ Proximity to shoreline, docks, or other structures.
- ☐ Hours of Operation
- ☐ Portions of Lake where wake enhanced watercraft use is allowed.
- ☐ None of the above

5.) Do you have other thoughts or opinions?

Please mail or drop off your completed survey to the Town of Land O'Lakes Town Hall
P.O. Box 660
Land O'Lakes, WI. 54540

Completed surveys are due by August 31, 2023