

LOBA RECREATIONAL BOATING SURVEY - 2004

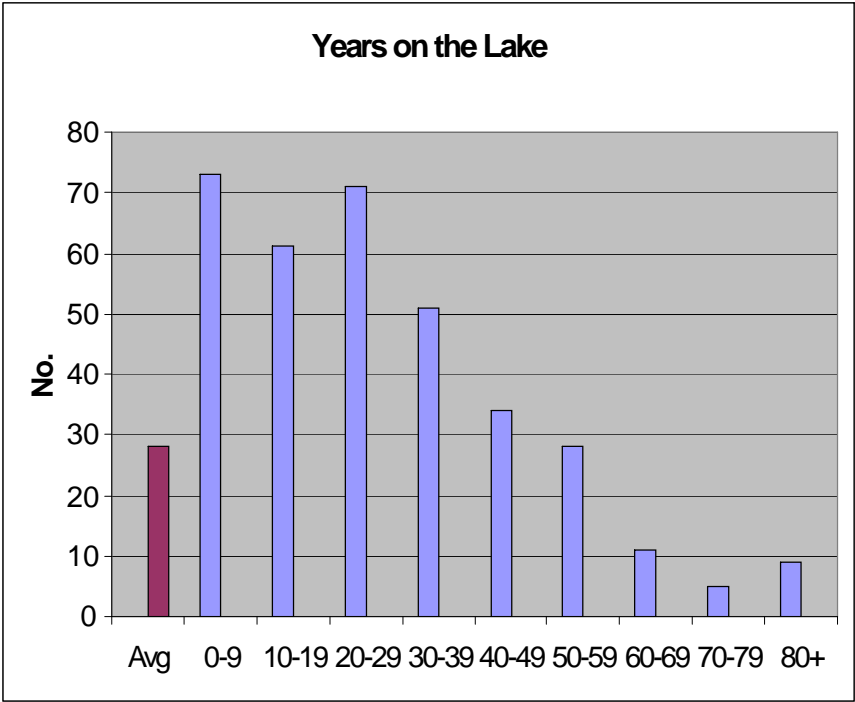
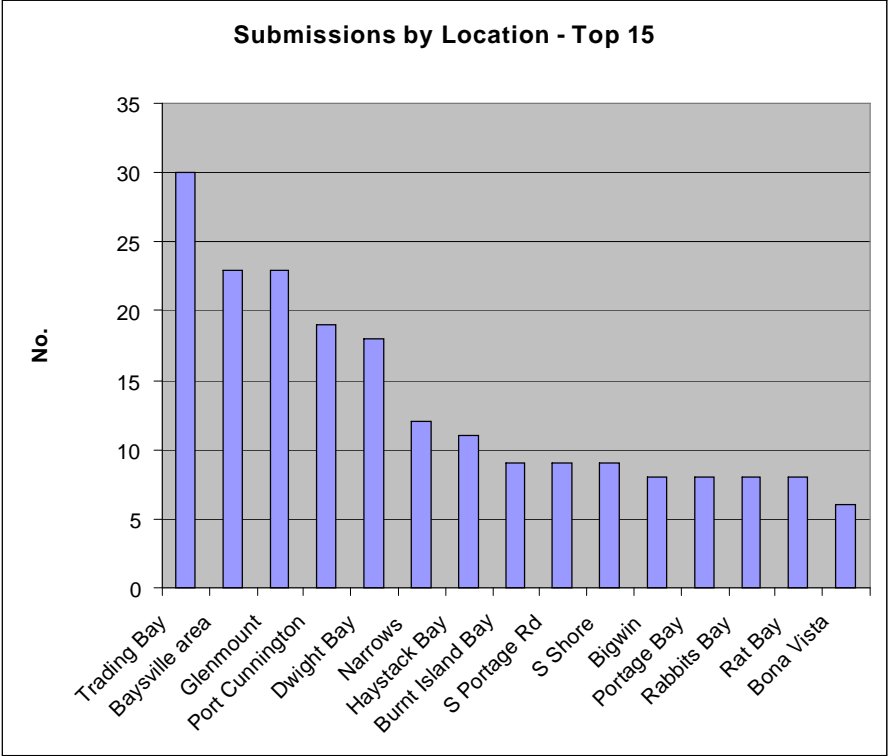
PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY

To gather information from LOBA members that will help guide the activities of LOBA's Recreation and Safety Committee.

To provide fact-based input to the decision making process for other bodies such as FOCA, the Coast Guard, The OPP, and Canadian Marine Advisory Council

RESPONSE

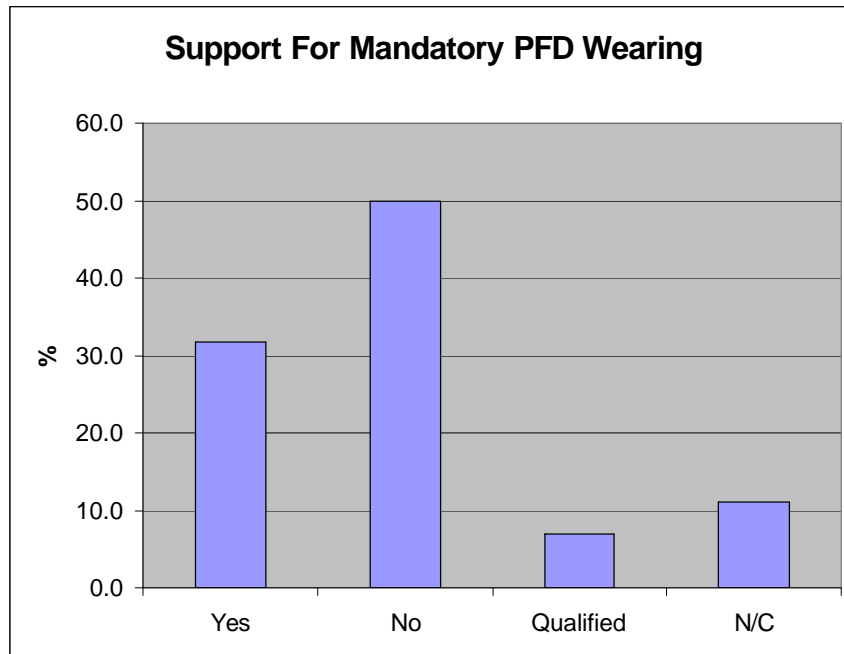
Received approximately 350 surveys, representing 25% of the LOBA membership. This is considered quite high. Cottage locations were in all areas of the lake. Responders averaged 28 years of ownership on Lake Of Bays.



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SUMMARY OF RESULTS

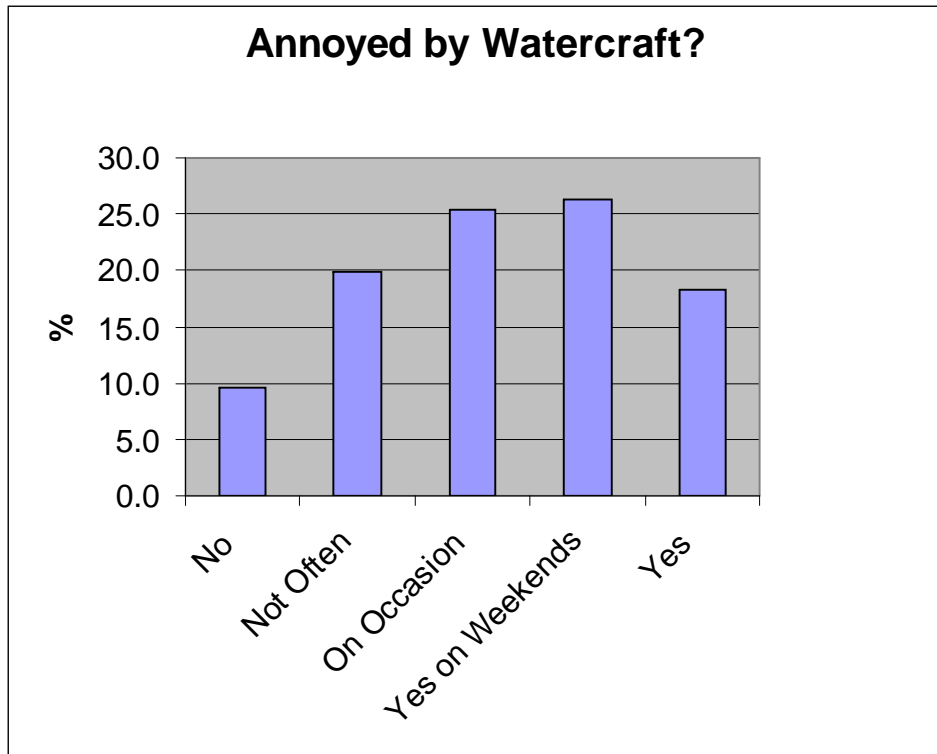
1. Cottagers have an average of 5 boats in their fleet.
 - 2 manually powered, usually canoes or kayaks
 - 1 Sail boat, often a windsurfer
 - 2 powerboats. usually a a tinny and a larger boat.
2. Support for mandatory Personal Flotation Device wear in boats is mixed
 - 32% said yes
 - 50% said no
 - 7% said yes but only for a subset of people (e.g. children under the age of X, non-swimmers)
 - 11% did not respond.



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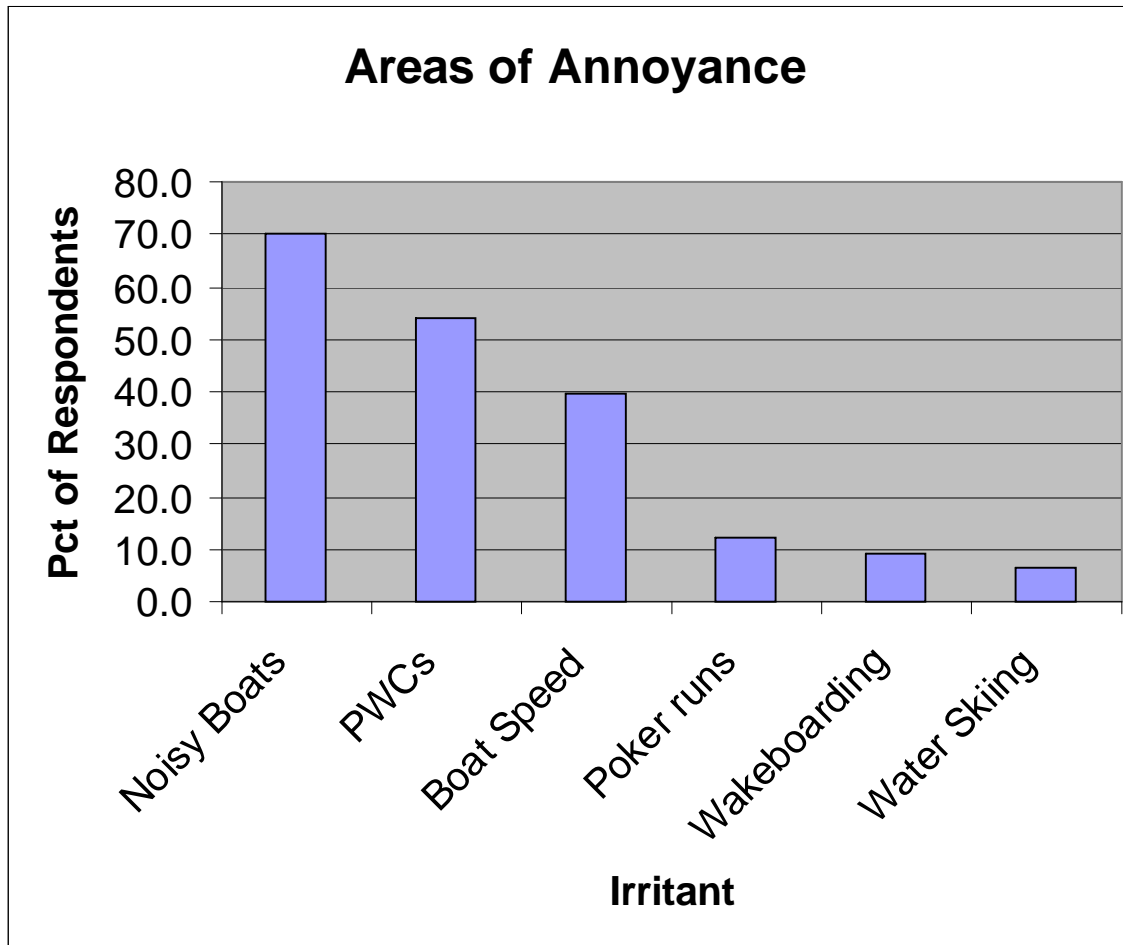
SUMMARY OF RESULTS (cont'd)

3. The behaviour of other boaters occasionally or regularly affects 70% of the cottagers.



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Noisy boats, Personal Water Crafts, and boat speed have the greatest impact.



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COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS

1. Survey in general
 - Thank you for giving us the chance to comment.
 - Vast majority of boaters are responsible.

2. Mandatory wearing of PFD's. *Not many comments from those who said "yes".*
 - Current PFD rules are adequate
 - Mandatory PFD wear is unnecessary intrusive government regulation. Please fight this.
 - Shouldn't require PFDs on Lake Of Bays. Use common sense.
 - Strongly oppose mandatory PFD wearing.
 - PFD's mandatory for under 16 years
 - On our lake, wearing PFD's is not necessary or comfortable
 - Experienced boaters do not need PFDs
 - Darwin will decide.
 - We have seat belts in cars, why not PFD's in boats?
 - I believe there are more than enough laws mandating safety, and I would include further regulation in the "greatest negative impact" category affecting boating enjoyment.

3. On nuisance boating in general.
 - Concerned about over-regulation. Big brother. Where is personal responsibility.
 - People who have "out of reason issues" should move to smaller lakes.
 - Pretty hard to enforce anything. It is even more difficult to appeal to their thoughtfulness.
 - Only ask for common courtesy from boaters in respecting neighbours and others.
 - ALL the activities are part of cottage life. As long as they are done safely, don't punish all because of a few. If water activities are not to your liking, don't locate on a lake where these activities are.
 - Very difficult to solve the problems on a lake the size of LOB, other than making boaters aware that there are other people on the lake besides themselves.

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- I do not believe we have a serious boating problem on our lake. Don't see many more boats than we saw 20 years ago.
 - Many of the inconsiderate boaters come from off Lake Of Bays.
4. On noisy boats. *Frequent comments on the excessive noise from cigarette boats with through-hull exhaust.*
- New muffler regulations do not appear to have made a difference.
 - Whatever happened to mufflers & consideration for others?
 - High speed racing boats don't make sense on our lake.
 - Must get rid of boats with above water exhaust.
 - Problems with large twin engine boats racing around who come from other lakes.
 - Above water exhaust should be eliminated or muffled.
 - Not much you can do without a gun.
 - The fear that I have is that we will become like other Muskoka Lakes, with too many large boats. A length and horsepower limit may be wise.
 - Both noisy boats and PWC's appear to have disrespect for others and to be exceptionally noisy.
 - Boats with muffler systems above the waterline should be banned. There is no reason to have them there.
 - The racing boats create the noise levels that really disturb the peace. We don't need these on the lake.
 - Over last decade high speed cigarette boats come through the narrows at >50knots with high engine noise.
 - Too many large powerful extremely noisy boats whose sole function seems to be to make as much noise as possible.
 - I'd like to see a maximum HP and length established for the lake to ban "oversized" boats.
 - I find the lake to be quiet. What's the problem? *(from Green Point)*

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- Most people don't want to be seen as a bad neighbour by complaining about noisy boats.. An indirect complaint system would be great.
5. On PWC's. *These continue to be an irritant despite the permit system and reduced noise levels.*
- Noisy PWC's doing circles causing a safety hazard to canoes and small craft
 - PWC's spend far too long going in circles in the bay in front of the cottage
 - PWC's are noisy and ruin the evening's calm water
 - PWC's operate too fast when close to people & docks.
 - Noisy unmuffled boats that roar down the lake at high speed at least go away eventually. The PWC's stay around to spoil your enjoyment of the lake.
 - As for PWC's, why should we be subjected to idiots spinning around in circles trying to create great waves while disturbing us on shore?
 - We are annoyed by mindless PWC nimrods doing dough-nuts.
 - PWC's are noisy, dangerous, and pointless
 - PWC's are for joy-riding. Why else buy them.
6. On boat speed. *Many complaints about high speed near shore.*
- Boats operate too close to shore. Come around the point and can't see swimmers.
 - Neighbours crossing in front at high speeds when leaving from or returning to shore.
 - River near Baysville like Hwy 400. Surprised that no one has been killed.
 - High speed wake boarders and PWC's operate too close to shore.
 - Would support a max HP bylaw to prevent off-lake speedboats from using LOB as a weekend thrill lake.
 - Overpowered oversized boats are a hazard to all and are ridiculous on our lake.
 - Set reasonable speed limits to minimize the "look at me yahoos" on the lake.

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7. On Poker Runs

- Eliminate poker runs, especially high speed "out draft" noisy boats.
- During poker runs, there is an excess of larger cigarette type inboard & outboard boats with very noisy motors. They break the speed limits in the narrows.

8. On Wakeboarding. *Not many raised this as a complaint, but those who did were very forceful.*

- Wakeboarders make big wake. Plays havoc with docks and shoreline.
- Real problem is inconsiderate operators of larger boats who don't understand or care what their wakes are doing to all of our shorelines.
- Wakeboarders and slow sightseers come too close to shore and throw up large wake destroying shoreline. Erosion is a huge problem on the lake and on the Oxtongue River.
- Waves from wakeboarding boats damages our boats and shoreline due to huge wake in small bay.
- I have experienced 18" waves eroding our beach and pounding my boats against the dock. Had bowline ripped off.
- Wakeboards are dreadful, but the family who annoyed me have left the lake.

9. On skiing & tubing

- Our location is just past a point of land, and people often come too close to the point, especially skiers.

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WHAT SHOULD LOBA DO ABOUT IT?

| Respondent Suggestions | Is it feasible? |
|--|--|
| Build an education programme that focuses on responsible boating. | Good idea, but requires a continuous effort in many forms. Info in Current Connections & year book. Hand-outs at marinas. Signage at boat launches, marinas, boat rental locations. Articles in the Muskoka Sun, Muskoka Magazine (LOBA page) etc. Need slogan "Boat Right, Be Polite" Potential for a joint initiative with FOCA here. Article in Cottage Life? |
| Work with the OPP to enforce existing noise regulations. | Need to show them the results of the survey. |
| Continue our efforts to strengthen regulations to control exhaust noise. | Currently inactive. Need to go back to Canadian Marine Advisory Council to push for decibel limits. |
| Consider LOBA marine patrol. | Muskoka Lakes Assoc and Georgian Bay Assoc have them. They have no policing power, but do inform boaters if they are behaving in an unsafe or illegal fashion, and have a direct pipeline to the OPP to report repeat offenders. Boats may be supplied by local marina. Funding support from federal government. This does require significant work effort to research, implement, and then run. Is it worth the energy? Need a dedicated volunteer for this. |
| Support legislation that will provide control over PWC usage. | Yes. We hope to see it passed this term. |
| Ban PWC's | Will have the tools when the PWC legislation is enacted, but unlikely to get any support for a ban on the entire lake. Local groups in small bays have a better chance, or maybe a 10:00 AM - 4:00PM operating window. Even this would take a lot of energy. |
| Establish a horsepower and boat size limit on the lake | Tilting at windmills. It is highly unlikely that you could get any consensus on what limits to set. Many would fight any limit at all. |
| Ban poker runs | There is no authorization required to run one, and no jurisdiction monitors them. Besides, Poker Runs help local merchants. Maybe we should hold "Silent" poker runs for canoes/kayaks/rowboats. This could tap into the large number of these boats on the lake, produce a LOBA-sponsored fun event, and help local merchants. |

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PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

| Activity | Priority | Timing |
|--|----------|--|
| 1. Develop a comprehensive education programme. Discuss results with FOCA (Terry Rees, Jeff Butler) and work with them to make it generic, not just LOBA specific. Results would be made available to all Ontario cottage associations for use in their newsletters. | High | Develop over winter for spring initiation |
| 2. Add results to the LOBA website (www.lakeofbaysassc.com) and to the next issue of Current Connections, the LOBA newsletter.. | High | September/October |
| 3. Assemble all comments related to the OPP, and discuss results with them. | High | Target for January meeting |
| 4. Prod Canadian Marine Advisory Council into developing the next phase on noisy boat regulations; decibel limits. | Medium | This winter to initiate. Will take months to have regulations in place |
| 5. Distribute results to Georgian Bay Association/Muskoka Lakes Association. | Medium | September/October |
| 6. Conduct a feasibility study on LOBA marine patrol | Medium | Fourth quarter |
| 7. Organize Silent Poker Run out of Dorset. | Medium | Develop in 1st quarter 2005 |