

2022 Member Survey – The results are in!

The Lake of Bays Association (LOBA) represents the interests of seasonal and permanent residents of Lake of Bays in the Northern Muskoka area of Ontario, Canada. The LOBA is now one of the largest associations in Ontario representing the interests of cottage and area residents.

Membership is open to all permanent and seasonal residents of Lake of Bays and the surrounding area.

LOBA's Purpose:

The Association was formed in 1927. The original concerns of the Association were:

- Water levels (levels were raised when the dam was installed at Baysville)
- Fire protection (there were no trained volunteer firefighters in those days)
- Navigation (no buoys or markers on the lake)
- Preservation of clean water (people could drink untreated water from the lake then)
- Scenic beauty (we still love it)

The last member survey was administered in 2012, so it was time to see how membership, priorities, values, and emerging issues may have changed. The goal of this 2022 Member Survey is to develop a strategic plan for the next 5-10 years.

The 2022 Member Survey indicated the following top priorities:

1. Water quality testing

Respondents rated water quality testing as extremely important (70%) or very important (24%).

2. Boating and water safety

Respondents rated boating and water safety as extremely important (53%) or very important (31%).

3. Development

Respondents rated engagement in large-scale developments (e.g., Langmaid's Island Appeal) as extremely important (66%) or very important (20%) for LOBA's involvement.

Respondents also rated enforcement of development permit by-laws around waterfront development as extremely important (55%) or very important (29%).

4. Environmental initiatives

Respondents rated invasive species education and monitoring/reporting as extremely important (54%) or very important (35%) for LOBA's involvement.

Respondents also rated climate impacts education and monitoring/reporting (e.g., water levels, extreme weather) as extremely important (42%) or very important (33%)

Compared to the previous 2012 Member Survey Report, the priorities of LOBA members continue to focus on water quality testing, boating and water safety, and development. However, development has seen an increase in importance to LOBA members.

Communication

The main forms of valued communication among LOBA members included: 1) the annual yearbook (including feature articles, reports, and membership directory); 2) the Biannual Current Connection newsletter (print and online); 3) monthly e-News Flashes; 4) LOBA website; and 5) education responses (including boating, invasive species, shoreline naturalization. Less importance was placed on LOBA's social media presence (Facebook and Instagram), which caters to younger audiences.

Member Profile

Over one-half, (54 %) of LOBA members are between 50 and 69 years old, followed by 70-79 (29%), 80+ (13%) and less than 5% are between 30-49. Similarly, the 2012 Member Survey Report indicated LOBA members were predominately over the age of 50, with 32% over the age of 70. Currently, 41% are over the age of 70.

LOBA members indicated variety in their personal use of their Lake of Bays property. Most LOBA members (39%) use their property year-round, but not as a permanent residence. Meanwhile, almost 36% of LOBA members use their property seasonally as a summer cottage, between May to October. The remaining LOBA members use their Lake of Bays property as their permanent residence (23%) but may live elsewhere for 3-6 months (6%). Permanent residence has increased at the Lake of Bays. In the 2012 Member Survey Report, approximately 16% of LOBA members used their Lake of Bays property as their permanent residence, including those who lived elsewhere for 3-6 months (6%).

Approximately 90% of LOBA members own waterfront properties on the Lake of Bays, with less than 3% owning a waterfront property on another lake near the Lake of Bays. The remaining 7% own non-waterfront properties near the Lake of Bays or rent property on the Lake of Bays.

Among the LOBA members who allow others to use their property (not as guests), 85% share with family (adult children and their families, siblings, and their families) and 4% rent their property.

With remote work increasing, LOBA members are working remotely from their property occasionally (45%), part-time (22%) or full-time (6%), with 27% not working remotely from their Lake of Bays property.