

The purpose of the Lake of Bays Association is to promote, sustain and enhance a clean and healthy natural environment, a well-serviced community and a safe and peaceful Lake of Bays.



## There's a by-law for that!

*By-laws are enacted and enforced by the Township of Lake of Bays and Town of Huntsville and apply to many things like Building, Dark Skies, Outdoor Burning, Animal Control, Noise ..... you get the picture.*

By-laws have an impact on many aspects of day-to-day life at your Muskoka home.

For a complete listing of by-laws, visit Township of Lake of Bays [lakeofbays.on.ca](http://lakeofbays.on.ca) or

Town of Huntsville [huntsville.ca](http://huntsville.ca).

Because by-laws cover so many different things, it is often best to check in with the Town or Township before starting any project around your residence. That way, you'll never get caught inadvertently breaking a by-law. In this issue, we are giving a quick overview of three Township of Lake of Bays by-laws.

### Dark Skies

To ensure responsible lighting, reduce light pollution and promote conservation of a dark sky environment, the By-law to Regulate Outdoor Illumination was implemented in 2013. The By-law encourages use of low wattage, energy efficient lighting in waterfront and rural areas to:

...continued next page

## WATER QUALITY still top notch

by Caroline Konarzewski

Thanks to the efficient work of our new Water Quality Manager, Kieran Molony, the Lake of Bays Water Quality Report from Hutchinson Environmental Sciences has been completed and is available for download at [loba.ca/programs/environment/read-more/](http://loba.ca/programs/environment/read-more/).

The report indicates that we continue to have good water quality with total phosphorus concentrations meeting the highest Provincial standards for protection of nuisance aquatic plant growth at all sampling sites. The report also notes that any changes in total phosphorus concentrations in the lake are a result of regional precipitation and not likely the result of any development pressure.

Inadvertently, extra water quality control sampling was not done in 2021, which negatively impacted the ability to assess the integrity of the water testing program as well as was done in the past. Despite this, the HES Report states, "The Lake of Bays Association water quality monitoring program continues to provide a robust long-term data set to evaluate changes over time." The recommended extra water quality control samples will be reinstated for the summer of 2022 testing.

Testing also indicates that bacteria in the water continues to be below the allowable Provincial standard for recreational use at all sampling sites. Although this is good news it



does not mean that our lake water is safe for drinking without being treated first. Please do not swallow water when you are swimming and do not drink untreated water at any time.

Thanks go out to our intrepid water quality sampling team of Margaret Casey, Pascale Clouthier, Paul Fraser, Penny Thomas and Stephan Von Buttler; and to manager Kieran Molony. They were out on the lake three times this summer collecting samples and measuring water clarity. In addition, Kieran performed the bacteria analysis. We could not have this vast history about our lake's water quality without them. 

**above and below:** Volunteer Stephan Von Buttler takes samples. Water was collected three times last summer.



continued—There's a By-Law...page 1

- reduce impact on wildlife;
- prevent hazards to navigation;
- preserve the night sky; and
- preserve privacy.

In the Township Development Permit By-Law, which applies to all waterfront properties, it further requires:

The use of sensitive lighting practices that do not interfere with the view of the night sky or spill into surrounding properties will be required for all land uses. Lighting shall not exceed a maximum height of 9 metres (29.5 ft) and shall be directed downward.

**the bottom line:** Use the minimum number of light fixtures you need for safety, make sure light is not spilling onto your neighbour's property, make sure all fixtures are directed downward, and look up to make sure you can see the stars. \*See image below

## Vegetation Removal at the Shoreline

It is the intent of the Township to preserve vegetation along shorelines, for its ecological functions, its contribution to aesthetics and lake character and the reduction of the visual impact of development on the lakes. Vegetation removal within the shoreline activity area\* is permitted and would require

the issuance of a development permit. Vegetation removal within the remainder of the shoreline buffer\*\* while generally discouraged, is permitted in limited circumstances, such as for the purposes of a pervious pathway. A Category 1 development permit would be required in these instances.

These provisions do not apply to the removal of dead or dying trees, including those trees which present a potential hazard to life or property, or trimming or pruning.

Regulated vegetation includes healthy woody vegetation (trees and shrubs) measuring at least 4 feet in height. Smaller vegetation, including herbaceous vegetation is not regulated due to anticipated difficulty in enforcement. However, this vegetation is essential in the protection of shoreline habitat and water quality, and in the reduction in shoreline erosion. The Township strongly encourages landowners to maintain as much vegetation as possible

\*In order to maintain an appropriate balance between a natural shoreline and built form, the concept of shoreline activity areas has been developed. Shoreline activity areas are defined and focused areas of the shoreline within which development may occur. The Official Plan encourages 75%

of residential shorelines be maintained in a natural state.

\*\*A shoreline buffer shall be maintained abutting any portion of a shoreline that does not form part of a shoreline activity area. A shoreline buffer shall be a minimum of 15 metres (49.2 ft.) in depth measured inland from the ordinary water's edge, unless otherwise specified.

**the bottom line:** Inquire at the Township before you take down any trees or shrubs over 4 feet tall within 15 metres of your shoreline.

## Short Term Rentals

Effective January 1, 2022, anyone wishing to rent out their Lake of Bays property as a Short Term Rental (STR) is required to obtain a license. This will require:

- Application & Payment;
- STR Premises inspection; and
- Premises documents inspection including licence, codes of conduct and by-laws.

**the bottom line:** If you plan to rent out your property this summer, visit the Township of Lake of Bays website [lakeofbays.on.ca](http://lakeofbays.on.ca) to learn how to get your license. The process can take three to six weeks. 

## LIGHT TO PROTECT THE NIGHT

Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting



**Illuminating**  
ENGINEERING SOCIETY



### USEFUL



#### ALL LIGHT SHOULD HAVE A CLEAR PURPOSE

Before installing or replacing a light, determine if light is needed. Consider how the use of light will impact the area, including wildlife and the environment. Consider using reflective paints or self-luminous markers for signs, curbs, and steps to reduce the need for permanently installed outdoor lighting.

### TARGETED



#### LIGHT SHOULD BE DIRECTED ONLY TO WHERE NEEDED

Use shielding and careful aiming to target the direction of the light beam so that it points downward and does not spill beyond where it is needed.

### LOW LIGHT LEVELS



#### LIGHT SHOULD BE NO BRIGHTER THAN NECESSARY

Use the lowest light level required. Be mindful of surface conditions as some surfaces may reflect more light into the night sky than intended.

### CONTROLLED



#### LIGHT SHOULD BE USED ONLY WHEN IT IS USEFUL

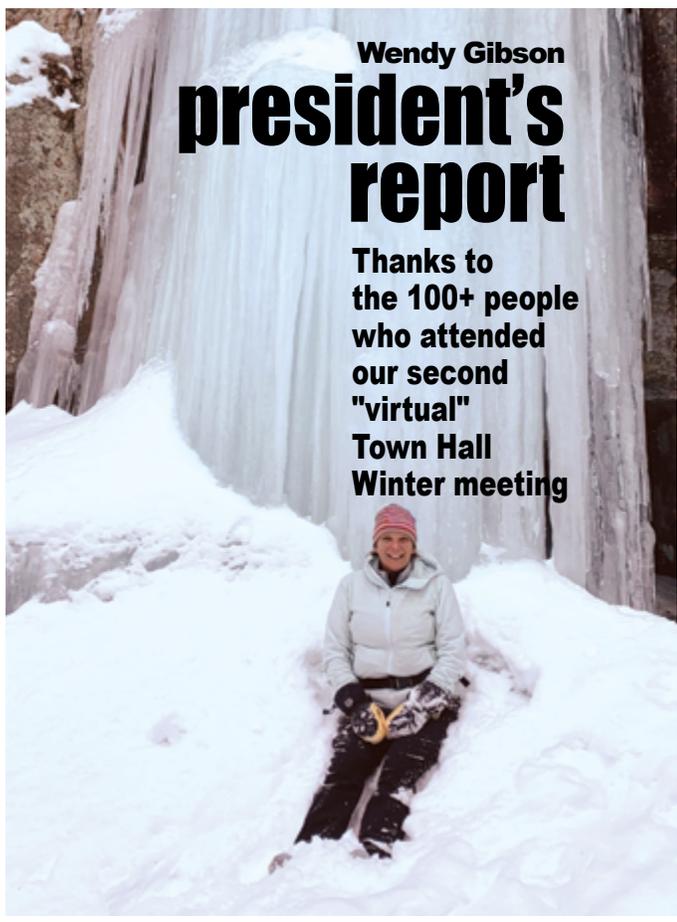
Use controls such as timers or motion detectors to ensure that light is available when it is needed, dimmed when possible, and turned off when not needed.

### COLOR



#### USE WARMER COLOR LIGHTS WHERE POSSIBLE

Limit the amount of shorter wavelength (blue-violet) light to the least amount needed.



## Wendy Gibson president's report

Thanks to  
the 100+ people  
who attended  
our second  
"virtual"  
Town Hall  
Winter meeting

Our winter Town Hall meeting was held virtually for the second year, with over 100 people tuning into the webinar on January 22. The keynote speaker, Greg Wilkinson, presented the findings of the 2021 survey, *Your Lakes, Your Views* conducted by Safe Quiet Lakes (SQL). With 5,951 respondents from across the Muskoka/Georgian Bay region, this is the most comprehensive survey of lake activity conducted by SQL (previous surveys were done in 2013 and 2017). For the first time, results specific to Lake of Bays were made available and Greg was able to include that information with his summary of attitudes about lake use and perceived trends in boating behaviour on our region's waterways. It was an excellent presentation, with highlights shared in this issue of Current Connection on page 7.

For the last two summers, more than any other issue, our members have been concerned about poor boating behaviour. Complaints about excessive boat speeds, excessive wakes, and excessive noise from on board stereos seem to be on the rise. The river into Baysville, the Oxtongue River, and the Dorset Narrows are problem areas that

have been brought to our attention, but we have also heard complaints about other narrow bays or passes between the mainland and islands that bring boaters close to shore.

There is no doubt that the pandemic has resulted in more people using their cottages more often. Cottage rentals, boat rentals and boat sales have also seen a dramatic increase with so many people choosing stay-cations for the last two years. Muskoka's lakes have become busier, and while Lake of Bays has enjoyed its reputation as a "quieter" lake than the "big three" Muskoka lakes (Lake Muskoka, Lake Rosseau and Lake Joseph), we too are seeing more boat traffic.

LOBA's Safety Committee has created an information sheet called "Boating on Lake of Bays". Recognizing that boating, of all kinds, is the essence of lake life, the message does not discourage boating—there is plenty of room on Lake of Bays for everyone. Our focus is on encouraging all boaters to be aware of how their boat speed, wake and noise impacts other boats, people, wildlife, and shorelines. The one-page format is ideal for inclusion in a cottage rental binder and has helpful boating information that is specific to Lake of Bays. We will be mailing a hard copy to every member household with the yearbook in June and a digital copy is available now on our website [loba.ca/programs/safety/read-more/](http://loba.ca/programs/safety/read-more/).

We will also be reaching out to marinas and cottage rental agencies to help get our message out to visitors to our lake. We will continue to work with SQL and the OPP on solutions to safety concerns, so please keep us informed of any specific issues that arise this summer.

Other guest speakers at the Winter Town Hall included Mayor Terry Glover and Stephanie Mack, Director of Solid Waste Management for the District of Muskoka.

Mayor Glover reported that like many corporations during the pandemic, the Township has experienced several personnel changes, including hiring of CAO, Bryan Brown, Director of Finance, Patricia Allen, and Director of Planning, April-Best Sararas. Terry also noted that the local food banks are in good shape due to the generous donations of seasonal and permanent residents. He suggested that a sector that is suffering from pandemic disruptions is the arts and encouraged everyone to support and champion our local arts and culture community in whatever way possible. Be sure to check out [artsloop.ca](http://artsloop.ca).

**For the last two summers, more than any other issue, our members have been concerned about poor boating behaviour.**

Stephanie Mack shared some hard facts about the District of Muskoka's failing grade in waste diversion and a warning that unless there are changes, the Rosewarne Landfill will reach capacity in 2036. The good news is that plans are in the works to increase our waste diversion over the coming years by reducing garbage bag limits, expanding organics programs, implementing a waste site pass system, supervising unstaffed depots, implementing a clear bag program and a community litter program. Reduced bag limits and an organics waste program are coming soon to Lake of Bays.

The municipal elections are on **October 24, 2022**. While that seems a long way off, LOBA is already starting to plan our "Elections Issue" of Current Connection that features the results of our candidate questionnaires so that residents can learn more about each candidate and their position on important issues. We also plan to co-host an all-candidates meeting late in the summer. Like everything else, including our **AGM on July 9**, plans for in-person meetings are yet to be determined.

As I write this in late January, the pandemic continues to impact our lives, either directly, or indirectly, and we are all experiencing Covid fatigue. I am already looking forward to the promise of a carefree summer. In the meantime, I encourage you to remain patient, be kind to each other and support local business in any way you can. 



# BANG!

## Are Fireworks the Best Way to Celebrate?

by Caroline Konarzewski

**F**ireworks are a tradition that have become synonymous with such events as New Year's Eve, National birthdays, special long weekends like Victoria Day Weekend and Labour Day, football halftime shows, concerts and festivals. Their loud bangs and colourful displays are exciting and draw huge crowds.

We all know that fireworks are dangerous. But that's okay; accidents can be prevented by making sure we are careful to follow sensible safety rules. How many of us, though, are aware of the insidious danger to our health and environment? Are there any sensible safety rules about that?

### FIREWORKS BY-LAWS

#### Township of Lake of Bays

consumer fireworks are permitted as follows:

**July 1 and Statutory Holiday Weekends**

from dusk to 11 p.m.

They are prohibited at all other times and during a fire ban.

#### Town of Huntsville

consumer fireworks are permitted as follows:

**Any weekend between**

6:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.

on Friday, Saturday and Sunday

**New Year's Eve**

between 8:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m. the following day

**Victoria, Canada & Labour Day**

between 8:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.

The problem begins with the many chemicals that produce those spectacular displays of colour. Perchlorate salts (lithium, sodium, copper and barium) as well as calcium and strontium create the colours we see, when they are heated to the correct temperature. (i)

When fireworks are exploded the perchlorate salts fall to the ground and are washed into lakes and rivers where they dissolve easily. They remain in the water and in the soil for a very long time where they are absorbed by plants that wildlife eats and eventually end up in our food, too. Perchlorate salts can cause hypothyroidism which, in turn, affects many of our internal organs. (ii)

Unfortunately, it doesn't end there. The perchlorate salts in those fireworks do not burn up and many end up as poisonous aerosols in the air. When inhaled they can cause many health problems including vomiting, diarrhea, kidney disease, asthma attacks, cardiovascular issues, and various cancers. A burst of ozone from fireworks can create a gas that seriously irritates the lungs. (iii)

Can one fireworks display be a serious problem? Well, yes. Within an hour of a fireworks show there is a significant increase of heavy metals in the air. Included in this mix are also fine particulates, nitric acid, and sulphur dioxide. (iv)

The bangs and whistles of a fireworks show are also serious problems. They can cause hearing loss (v) and can contribute to fatal injuries to wildlife, birds (vi) and pets. (vii)

With so much bad news about fireworks perhaps we should be rethinking the use of them. It does seem that we have lost the focus of that special day/event and our thoughts and attention have turned to the nighttime spectacle.

**The problem begins with the many chemicals that produce those spectacular displays of colour.**

There are other ways to celebrate that are more meaningful and relevant to the occasion. Covid-19 aside, one can host or attend a party with a Canadian theme, hike a Canadian trail or visit a Canadian historical site for Canada Day; run a food drive in your neighbourhood or help out at a food bank for Thanksgiving; attend a parade for the New Year; wear an appropriate costume to a festival; or perhaps hold a chilly swim fest for the Victoria Day weekend. What you can do is limited only by your imagination and could quickly become a new, meaningful tradition for you and your family.

### RESOURCES

i) [compoundchem.com/2013/12/30/the-chemistry-of-fireworks/](http://compoundchem.com/2013/12/30/the-chemistry-of-fireworks/)

ii) [cdc.gov/TSP/ToxFAQs/ToxFAQsDetails.aspx?faqid=893&toxid=181](http://cdc.gov/TSP/ToxFAQs/ToxFAQsDetails.aspx?faqid=893&toxid=181)

iii) [nature.com/articles/35082634](http://nature.com/articles/35082634)

iv) [sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1352231006009745?via%3Dihub](http://sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1352231006009745?via%3Dihub)

v) [journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1260/09574560360698156](http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1260/09574560360698156)

vi) [forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2015/12/31/birds-flee-en-mass-from-new-years-eve-fireworks/?sh=7e11ab8c7850](http://forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2015/12/31/birds-flee-en-mass-from-new-years-eve-fireworks/?sh=7e11ab8c7850)

vii) [forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2019/07/03/use-science-to-help-your-dog-survive-fireworks-and-thunderstorms/?sh=23522d7196d1](http://forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2019/07/03/use-science-to-help-your-dog-survive-fireworks-and-thunderstorms/?sh=23522d7196d1)

# ROCKING 2022 the VOTE

This year Ontarians will be voting in two elections. The provincial election is on June 2 and municipal elections are on October 24. A team of LOBA volunteers will be watching the local municipal races closely and sharing information with our members in Newsflashes and at [loba.ca](http://loba.ca). We will be asking the candidates to answer a variety of questions that are of key interest to our members and will co-host All Candidates Meetings towards the end of the summer.

## Why Should You Care About Local Government?

Of all levels of government, municipal government decisions affect your life most directly. They are responsible for land-use planning and building permits, by-laws and their enforcement, roads, fire services, waste management, libraries, parks, economic development and much more.

## But Can Seasonal Residents Vote?

**YES!** If you own or rent property in the Township of Lake of Bays or Town of Huntsville, you are eligible to vote, provided you are a Canadian citizen and at least 18-years-old on Election Day. You can vote in BOTH your permanent and seasonal municipalities—and you should.

## The legal definition of who can vote

A person is entitled to be an elector at an election held in a local municipality (unless prohibited by the Municipal Elections Act or any other Act) if, on Voting Day (Monday, October 24th, 2022) he or she:

- is a Canadian citizen;
  - is at least eighteen (18) years of age;
  - resides in the municipality; or is the owner or tenant of land in the municipality, or a spouse or same-sex partner of such a person; and
  - who is not prohibited from voting by law.
- It is the responsibility of the elector to ensure they are qualified.

## It's Easy to Vote!

For the 2022 Municipal Elections, you will be able to vote by internet and telephone for approximately ten-days leading up to Election Day on October 24. That means if you are a seasonal resident, you do not need to make a special trip

## Who Currently Sits on Council?

### Township of Lake of Bays

#### Mayor

Terry Glover

#### Ward Councillors

Nancy Tapley, Franklin Rick Brooks, Sinclair/Finlayson George Anderson, Ridout Jacqueline Godard, McLean

#### District Councillors

Mike Peppard, Franklin/Sinclair Robert Lacroix, Ridout/McLean

### Town of Huntsville

(not a complete listing)

#### Mayor

Karin Terziano,

#### Ward Councillor

Daniel Armour, Brunel

#### District Councillors

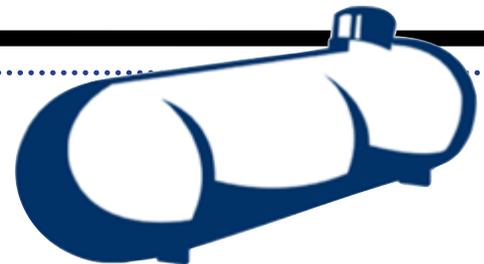
Nancy Alcock  
Brian Thompson  
Tim Withey

to the cottage to vote. And it makes voting easy for permanent residents as well.

As Election Day approaches, LOBA will provide information on how to make sure you are on the Voters' List. 

## Special propane rates for LOBA members

Partner's fixed rates for the 2021-22 season were **\$.60 and \$.62 per litre**



The Lake of Bays Association has partnered with Grant Propane and Superior Propane to help our members secure an attractive rate for their propane supply at their Lake of Bays area homes and cottages. Both propane partners offer competitive pricing as well as a long history of safety, reliable delivery and remote tank volume monitoring which is particularly useful for seasonal residents who do not have someone checking their property regularly.

Many people don't realize the wide disparity in pricing amongst suppliers. Our partner's fixed rates for the 2021/2022 season were \$0.60 and \$0.62 per litre plus taxes. Compare that with what you paid this past winter and calculate what your sav-

ings would have been. If you are not part of a buying group, you may be paying substantially more.

Once winter is coming to an end, it is a good time to arrange switching to one of our suppliers. Do not have your existing vendor top-up or fill your tank, and do not pay any annual tank fees prior to switching.

If you are already a propane customer with another supplier, and want to switch to a LOBA partner, contact Board member, Fraser Govan, at **705-767-3692** or [fgovan@cottagecountry.net](mailto:fgovan@cottagecountry.net) who will forward your information to our suppliers. In order to continue in the program, you must maintain your LOBA membership. 

**A**lgae are a normal, essential part of our lake. They form the base of the food-web and ultimately feed all life in the water. They also release significant amounts of oxygen which is kind of handy for us humans. Without algae our lake would be dead, and our lungs would be complaining.

It is only when conditions come together in just the right way that algae can grow quickly and become visible as a bloom. Even if they are annoying, unpleasant to be around, sometimes smelly, or just plain nasty to swim through; most are harmless.

Blue-green algae blooms however, are the exception. They can produce dangerous toxins and it is important to take action to prevent harm coming to anyone.

### What do we know about the causes of algal blooms?

The short answer is, not much. It is only in the past few years that extensive research is being undertaken. Blooms in Muskoka used to be extremely rare but are now becoming more frequent. The Muskoka Watershed Council (MWC) is conducting studies in four vulnerable Muskoka lakes which will hopefully lead to a better understanding of blooms in Muskoka.

There are many factors that can cause algal blooms including phosphorus levels, air temperature, water temperature, wind, rain, disturbances of the soil near the water's edge, disturbances of the lakebed, the loss of naturally occurring forest growth along the shoreline and other triggers which not yet fully understood or perhaps unknown. Climate change also seems to be having an impact on the number and frequency of blooms. We have much to learn.

### The problem

The biggest problem concerns blue-green algal blooms that have the potential to become dangerously toxic to humans and animals, including your pets. If there is a possible blue-green bloom in the lake it is important that you follow the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) guidelines:

- Do not use lake water for infant formula.
- Do not use lake water for drinking or cooking. Even treated lake water is not safe enough.
- Do not boil lake water or use herbicides, copper sulphate or other algaecides. These may break open algae cells and release more toxins.
- Do not allow pets nor small children to drink or swim in the lake. Pets and small children cannot be stopped from swallowing water



by Caroline Konarzewski

## taking action on BLUE GREEN ALGAE in Lake of Bays

while swimming and, because they are little, a small dose can have serious consequences.

- Do not swim or participate in other water sports where an algal bloom is visible.
- Be extremely careful about eating fish caught in water where an algal bloom is occurring.

### How to identify

The only way to truly identify a blue-green algal bloom is through a lab test. The best that you can do is make an educated guess, and report the bloom to the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change:

- water that looks bluish-green, like pureed pea soup or a spill of turquoise paint with clumps in very dense blooms;
- sometimes smells of newly mown grass or rotting garbage.

### Take action—report that bloom

If a bloom appears near your shoreline, it does not mean that you are responsible for causing it. Blooms are free spirits that drift easily around the lake.

Because it could be dangerously toxic to everyone, please take action and report it. Call the **Spills Action Hotline** at 866-663-8477 or the **SMDHU** at 705-788-0974.

Please also let LOBA know at [info@loba.ca](mailto:info@loba.ca) so that we can notify our members immediately if the lab test confirms a blue-green bloom. If it comes back negative, we can heave a sigh of relief.

## Area Stewards KEEP LOBA STRONG

**T**he Lake of Bays Association relies on a group of hard-working volunteers called Area Stewards, each of whom is responsible for a road or roads. Their role is to ensure the residents on their assigned road(s) are aware of LOBA, to encourage non-members to join and remind lapsed members. They are also tasked with letting the LOBA office know about residents' issues and concerns, and about changes in property ownership.

Volunteers are given a road(s) assignment, ideally close to their home base. In "normal times", there is a meeting in June to distribute supplies, meet other Area Stewards and discuss pertinent issues for the upcoming summer season. Area Stewards are provided a contact list for their road(s) assignment and asked to reach out to the residents of their area over the summer months. During the months of February and March, Area Stewards are asked to send a gentle reminder to members by email, phone or in-person visit. It's a great way to meet new neighbours! Interested in helping out?

We currently have over 50 Area Stewards but there is always room for more. Let Linda Robinson know if you would like to volunteer [linda.a.robinson@gmail.com](mailto:linda.a.robinson@gmail.com).

### AREAS WHERE WE NEED HELP

Melrose Road	Arts Road
Clark's Drive	Montgomery Bay Road
Port Cunnington Rd	Collison Lane
1099 to 1296	Elder Drive
1306 to 1435	Hilltop Crescent
1436 to 1920	Reid Lane
Hermans Road	Robson Lane
Ravenhill Road	Birkendale Road
Munroe Road	Dorset
Boyces Road	Little Trading Bay
Smith Road	Nithgrove
Barker's Road	

### Helpful Resources

For more information, search for blue-green algae at the following websites:

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit  
[simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://simcoemuskokahealth.org)  
Government of Ontario  
[ontario.ca](http://ontario.ca)  
Muskoka Watershed Council  
[muskokawatershed.org](http://muskokawatershed.org) 



# Safe Quiet Lakes

## YOUR LAKES, YOUR VIEWS

The challenge is big, but the treasure of the lakes is worth every effort

Lake users are passionate about life on the water, and Safe Quiet Lakes has sponsored ongoing research to learn more about what people enjoy, what concerns them, and the solutions they support. The lake activity surveys in 2013, 2017 and 2021 give the communities of the Muskoka and Georgian Bay Regions clear and credible data to inform dialogue on pressing issues. Here is a summary of this year's survey and specifics for Lake of Bays responses.

The lakes support a huge range of activities. Most respondents regard half a dozen of these as important. **figure 1**

### Important findings we can act on

The research identifies two fundamental expectations we have of each other—more than 90% of respondents say we are responsible for preserving the natural state of the lakes for the future, and also that power boaters have more responsibility for the safe co-existence of activities on the lakes. Those who operate power boats and those who do not hold this view equally. These are consensus principles to build on.

The most frequently cited concerns were wakes, inappropriate speed close to shore, and noise. Worth noting, PWC's are the most frequently cited source of both noise and behavioural concerns even though they represent only 5% of the boats on the water. **figure 2**

Overall trends since 2013 show some unsettling developments. Lake of Bays respondents perceive that noise and traffic are up, while safety is down. This pattern is consistent across all regions in the survey. **figure 3**

Noise, traffic and safety all have pronounced impacts on people's experience of the lakes. The 43% of Lake of Bays respondents who consider their lake "Very safe" rate their overall quality of experience at 9.3 out of 10. When perceived safety drops toward "Not at all safe", the overall quality of experience declines dramatically. **figure 4**

A key change that appears to affect how people feel about their safety and comfort on the water is the dramatic growth of paddling. **figure 5 (next page)**

Since 2013, kayaking is up from 60% to 76% of respondents, paddleboard use has rocketed from 26% to 59%, and in that same

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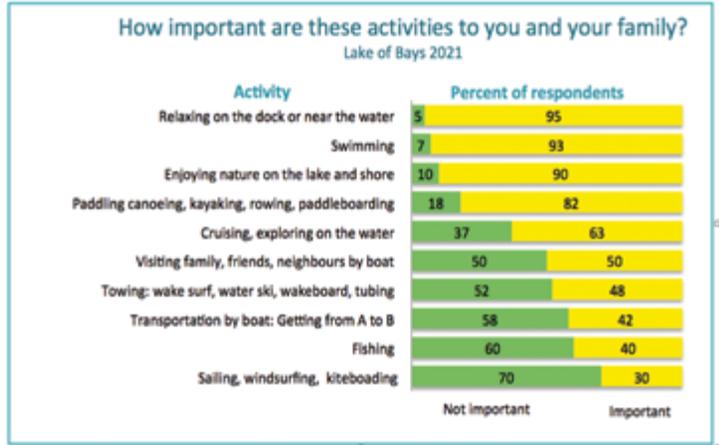


figure 1

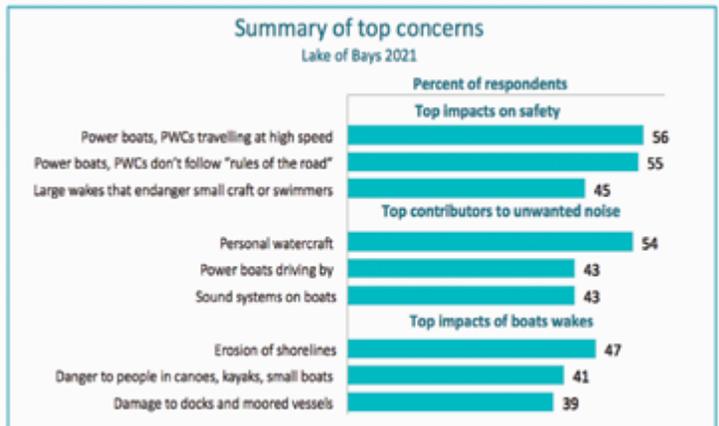


figure 2

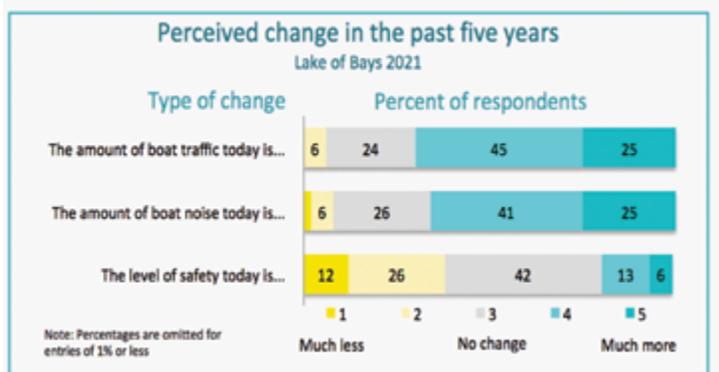


figure 3



figure 4

continued—Safe Quiet Lakes ...page 7

period the percentage of people who say paddling is very important to them has grown by 18%. The data reveals that paddlers feel more concern about power boat behaviours, even if they are also power **note:** Trends are based on the three larger Muskoka lakes, where the survey sample was consistent from 2013 to 2021.

From the nearly six thousand written comments, it is clear that many boaters have had their eyes opened to the issues of large wakes and high speeds through personally experiencing vulnerability and risk while operating a kayak, canoe or pad-



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**Muskoka**  
 705.645.4108 | 800.265.1759

**Midland**  
 705.792.9311 | 844.363.9311

**Collingwood**  
 705.445.4444 | 800.504.3053

[huronialarms.com](http://huronialarms.com)

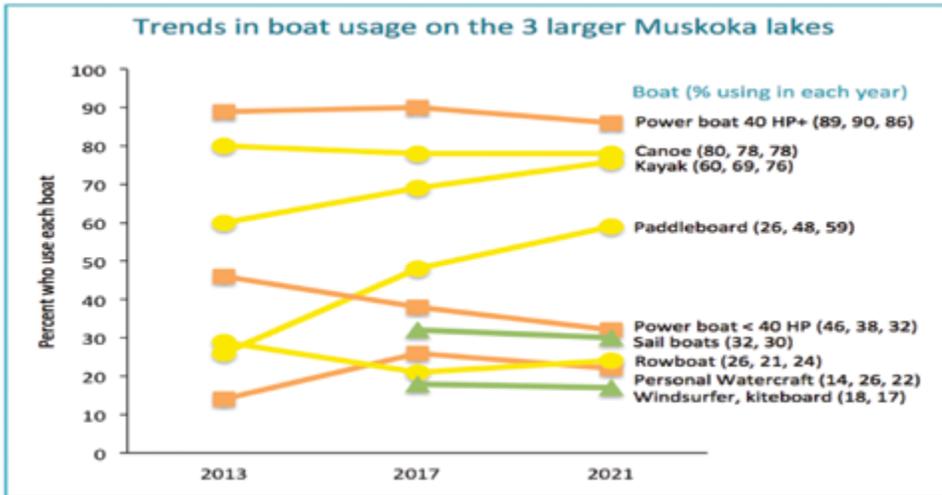


figure 5

dleboard. This group extends to those who also enjoy towing sports and other power boating activities. The growing community of paddlers is now a sizable majority of those who use the lakes.

Though there are increasing numbers of paddlers and an increasing awareness of risk; respondents also report more boat traffic and greater concerns over wakes and speed. These trends have resulted in a greater acceptance of formal solutions to address the issues, including:

- more enforcement of existing laws
- more presence of the OPP
- additional regulations

In their comments, respondents said they would prefer behaviour change because of communication and education, but there is a level of frustration growing and therefore a desire for stronger interventions. There also seems to be spillover from the development conflicts. These have mobilized cottagers and residents, resulting in a more confrontational and frustrated tone to the dialogue on safety and how we share the lakes.

**How the survey worked**

Almost 6,000 people representing 130+ lakes and rivers contributed to the YOUR LAKES, YOUR VIEWS survey commissioned by Safe Quiet Lakes. The 2021 all-volunteer research team was led by ERIN Research, supported by Earncliffe Strategies, students and faculty in the Marketing Research and Analysis program at Algonquin College, and many other volunteers. Safe Quiet Lakes is grateful for this extraordinary participation. It enables an evidence-based dialogue about sharing the space on the lakes and rivers we love.

The full 2021 report is available at [safe-quiet.ca](http://safe-quiet.ca). Please feel free to contact me if you would like to get involved with our wakes or noise projects or have some ideas that you would like to discuss.

**Diana Piquette**  
 CHAIR, SAFE QUIET LAKES  
[Chair@safequiet.ca](mailto:Chair@safequiet.ca)

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