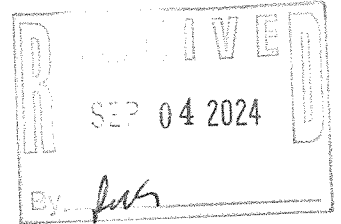


**MORRIS INLAND WETLANDS COMMISSION
COMMUNITY HALL
MORRIS, Conn. 06763**



July 15, 2024

To the Ordinance Committee

re: lake damage from wake boarding

Dear Members,

The Morris Inland Wetlands Committee endorses the Bantam Lake Protection Association's efforts to have an ordinance to prevent the creation of these oversize wakes within 500 feet of Bantam Lakes Shores. From a wetlands perspective the concern is the potential for shore and lake bottom damage from these waves.

To mostly quote from MDNR: We want to emphasize that responsible boating and fun on the water aren't mutually exclusive. We aren't trying to stop people from having fun on the water with family and friends; it's actually the opposite. By following this guidance, wake boaters can help protect lake health and ensure these waters are here and healthy for everyone to enjoy.

Michael Doyle
Morris Inland Wetlands Commission



MDNR Releases Special Report on Wake Boats

Published on: Sep 14, 2022



Wake boats: concerns and recommendations related to natural resource management in Michigan waters.

Message from Joe Nohner, Ph.D. Inland Lakes Habitat Analyst & Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership Coordinator, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Today DNR Fisheries Division is releasing Fisheries Report 37, "Wake boats: concerns and recommendations related to natural resource management in Michigan waters." With 3,300 miles of Great Lakes shoreline and more than 10,000 inland lakes, Michigan welcomes millions of boaters, anglers and other water-based recreationists every year. Wake boating, and towing surfers or wakeboarders behind wake boats, is an increasingly popular activity. These boats use ballast and other technologies to generate significantly larger wakes for wakeboarders to jump. Over time, though, these types of boats can potentially harm the environment.

New research compiled in the report shows that operation of wake boats can potentially threaten lake health. Several recent studies show that wake boats can produce waves of 1.7 to 17 times the energy of those created by other comparably sized power boats, and these generated waves take much longer to decrease in size, too – between 225 feet to 900 feet from the boat. These larger waves can damage property and cause shoreline

erosion, decrease water clarity and plant abundance, and add excess nutrients that contribute to poor water quality.

Another design feature on wake boats directs water from the boat's propellor toward the lake bottom. This water can generate turbulence that can kick up bottom sediments at much greater depths, which decreases water clarity and quality. Additionally, the water ballast systems in wake boats are easy places for aquatic invasive species, such as zebra mussels, to catch a ride and spread to other locations.

We know that wake boat operators want to enjoy time spent on clean, healthy lakes, just like everyone else who visits Michigan's waters. We've learned a lot in the last few years about the detrimental effects these boats can have on the environment, and these guidelines can help wake boaters do their part to protect our lakes.

To protect the health of Michigan's waters, and the fish and plant life that rely on them, through this report DNR Fisheries recommends that wake boaters should remember these three simple steps:

- When wakesurfing or wakeboarding, during which boat speed, wave shapers and/or ballast are used to increase wave height, operate at least 500 feet from docks or the shoreline, regardless of water depth.
- When wakesurfing or wakeboarding, never operate in water less than 15 feet deep.
- Completely drain ballast tanks before transporting a watercraft over land.

We will also be reaching out to the boating and lakes communities to discuss potential outreach and education approaches that can encourage these voluntary best practices.

We want to emphasize that responsible boating and fun on the water aren't mutually exclusive. We aren't trying to stop people from having fun on the water with family and friends; it's actually the opposite. By voluntarily following this guidance, wake boaters can help protect lake health and ensure these waters are here and healthy for everyone to enjoy.

If you have questions you are welcome to contact Joe Nohner (517-599-6825, nohnerj@michigan.gov) and/or Jim Francis (517-242-3593, FRANCISJ@michigan.gov).

MLSA Note: We will be working with partners and legislators based on the recommendations in this report. You can stay updated via our newsletter, [subscribe here](#).

◀◀ **October 2022 Newsletter**
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September 2022 ▶▶
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Most recent news regarding Wake Boats from WI

Michigan House Takes Action Before Summer Recess

Reports of Wake Boat Caused Damage to Lakefront Property and Shorelines in Michigan Increasing in Frequency

Published on: Jun 7, 2017



By Scott Brown
ML&SA Executive Director

Michigan Lake and Stream Associations continues to receive numerous e-



mails and phone calls from lakefront property owners expressing their concern regarding damage to docks, moored boats, and shorelines caused by the increasingly large number of wake boats operating on Michigan's inland waters.

As wakeboarding has steadily increased in popularity over the past decade, statewide sales of recreational boats designed to create large, high energy wakes have also increased dramatically. Intense competition among wake boat manufacturers has led to the development of new technologies deployed to improve the ability of their boats to create increasingly high energy wakes. Variable, high volume ballast systems as well as specially designed

hulls, propellers, and powertrains, have all led to significant improvement in the performance of wake boats in recent years. The potential for collateral damage to docks, hoists, moored boats and other shoreline equipment as well as the potential for shoreline erosion increases with wake boat displacement, engine and hull size, and speed. Ballast laden wake boats operating at even moderate speeds are capable of producing surface and near-surface wake related energy levels that substantially exceeds the energy created by even the largest of waves induced by intense summer thunderstorms and/or high winds.

If you and/or your lakefront neighbors experience personal property, and/or shoreline erosion related damage during the coming summer as a result of wake boat operation, please be sure to contact your local law enforcement agency with specific information regarding the time and date of the incident(s), a detailed description of the damage, along with videos or photographs, and the registration number of the watercraft rendering the damage. The steadily increasing number of reports from those living on Michigan's lakefronts regarding the negative impact of wake boats on inland lake fish and wildlife habitat, native aquatic plant communities, lake water quality, and on personal shoreline property, strongly suggests that the time has come for the State of Michigan to intervene by more effectively regulating the operation of wake boats on our inland lakes. In the interim, Michigan Lake and Stream Associations recommends the following operating guidelines which are intended to help minimize the ecological and environmental impacts of wake boats. Wake boat operators should be advised to:

1. Reduce their speed within 500 feet of shore;
2. Not add ballast water or other extra weight to increase the displacement of their boats;
3. Not operate wake boats near sandy areas, natural shorelines, wetlands or lakefront residences;
4. Avoid turning wake boats in tight circles (tight circles increase wave height and frequency);
5. Avoid operating wake boats in shallow water and/ or near natural shorelines.