

**Whitewater-Rice Lake Management District**  
**P.O. Box 301**  
**Whitewater, WI 53190**

**Date:** November 29, 2010

**To:** Wisconsin Town Boards of Richmond and Whitewater

**From:** WWRLMD Board of Commissioners

**Re:** 1) Results of Recent Survey of Our District Members  
2) Recommendation for A New Ordinance to Restrict Boats from Enhancing Their Wakes

Survey Lake Management District Residents

Four important issues were raised and discussed at our annual meeting held at the Lakeview School on Saturday, August 28. There were approximately 90 people present and the discussion was active and very cordial. No decisions were made and the informal, non-binding polls that were taken by a show of hands revealed that there was no consensus among the meeting participants. So, it was decided that a survey should be sent to all owners so that the Board of Commissioners could forward the results to the Town Boards of Whitewater and Richmond to help them decide if current ordinance(s) should be modified or if any new ones should be passed.

Hence, at our last board meeting held Tuesday evening, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, we passed a resolution to post the Report of the Survey Results on our website and to send copies to you. A copy of the survey and a report of its results are included with this mailing.

Recommendation for A New Ordinance To Restrict Boats from Enhancing Their Wakes

At last week's meeting we had a wide ranging discussion of the survey results and what recommendations, if any, we should pass on to you. As you will see three of the four issues on the survey (A, B, and D) garnered majority opinions with 60% or fewer respondents supporting one option over the others. At this point in time, we decided not to forward any recommendations to you on these three issues. However, we do plan to revisit them at our meetings next spring and encourage you to discuss them as well.

Issue C which asked if boats should be prohibited from adding or using accessories to enhance their wakes received what we consider to be a very strong preference with 81% of the respondents indicating that, yes indeed, they think boats **should be prohibited** from adding or using accessories to enhance their wakes. So, we unanimously passed a resolution asking you to consider adopting an ordinance restricting the use of boat wake enhancement accessories on Whitewater and Rice Lakes. All of us on the Board believe that enhanced wakes pose a real threat to both property owners' seawalls as well as the earthen dam. To facilitate your discussion we refer you to ordinances that other Wisconsin lakes have adopted. Last June, the Village of Thiensville and City of Mequon, in Ozaukee County, each adopted an ordinance -- unique in Wisconsin, for now -- that prohibits artificial wake enhancement. The link to the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article about these ordinances is:  
<http://www.jsonline.com/news/ozwash/95287719.html>

Thank you in advance for your much appreciated consideration and discussion of these important issues.

Enclosures: 1) WWRLMD Survey and 2) Report of Results of WWRLMD Survey

## Results of the Survey of the Whitewater-Rice Lake Management District Residents Fall, 2010

### Introduction

Two hundred and seventeen (217) surveys (of approximately 720 surveys mailed) were returned which represents 30% of the WWRLMD residents. This response rate is very good since a return rate of 20% for a mailed survey is considered to be a good response rate especially in light of the fact that respondents had to use their own envelopes and pay their own postage to return the survey.

All percentages reported below were rounded up. Comments are presented and organized by issue after the first part of this report.

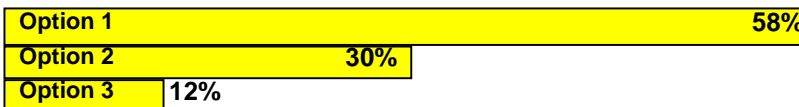
### Issue A: Number of Riders Allowed on a Tube or Other Devices

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 1. <u>Keep current ordinance (two ropes with no more than two persons)</u> | <b>130/60%</b> |
| 2. <u>Change ordinance to allow up to the tube designed maximum</u>        | <b>86/40%</b>  |
- Note: One survey respondent did not answer this question and only two survey respondents supported allowing more than two ropes per boat.



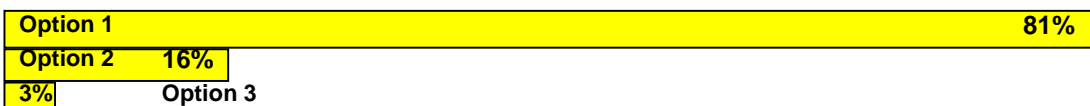
### Issue B: Appropriate Level for No-Wake Ban

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 1. <u>Keep the current reading of 1.6 on the metric painted on the dam spillway</u>            | <b>125/58%</b> |
| 2. <u>Lower the reading to 1.5 on the metric painted on the dam spillway</u>                   | <b>65/30%</b>  |
| 3. <u>Lower the reading to a level below 1.5 (suggestions ranged from no-wake ever to 1.4)</u> | <b>27/12%</b>  |



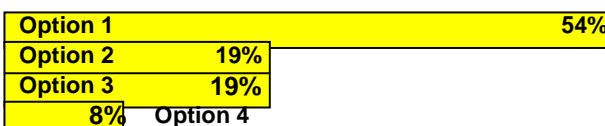
### Issue C: Boat Wake Enhancement

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 1. <u>Prohibit boats from adding or using accessories to enhance their wakes</u> | <b>176/81%</b> |
| 2. <u>Allow boats to add or use accessories to enhance their wakes</u>           | <b>34/16%</b>  |
| 3. <u>No Opinion</u>   | <b>7/3%</b>    |



### Issue D: No Wake Hours

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 1. <u>Keep current no-wake hours (Sun-Thurs before 9 &amp; after sunset; Fr, Sat, Holidays before 9 &amp; after 7)</u> | <b>117/54%</b> |
| 2. <u>Change no-wake hours to before 9 and after 7 or sunset (whichever comes first) 7 days/week</u>                   | <b>41/19%</b>  |
| 3. <u>Change no-wake hours to before 10 and after 7 or sunset (whichever comes first) 7 days/week</u>                  | <b>41/19%</b>  |
| 4. <u>Other (suggestions were quite varied see comments below)</u>   | <b>18/8%</b>   |



## COMMENTS SUMMARY

A number in parentheses after a comment indicates the frequency of same or similar comments. Comments not related to a specific issue are included in the “General Comments” section below. Comments from Rice Lake residents are noted separately.

### **Issue A: Number of Riders Allowed on a Tube**

Comments in support of keeping current restrictions (two ropes pulling no more than two objects)

- Too many people potentially in water if restriction is lifted (4)
- It's a safety issue not a pleasure issue

Comments in support of changing current restrictions

- Three or four persons on tube OK if tube can handle it but no more than two tubes (2)
- More than two and up to six on tube OK if tube can handle it, but only allow one tube if more than two riders (2)
- More than two riders OK but not on weekends
- More than two tubes OK but only on two ropes

### **Issue B: Appropriate Level for No-Wake Ban**

Comments in support of keeping the 1.6 threshold

- Towns should not give into weekend owners' pressure to lift “no wake” (2)
- Lowering “no-wake” level would mean more “no-wake” days and the problem is not great enough to justify this happening. (2)
- No change needed because recent year high water levels are an anomaly

Comments in support of lowering the threshold

- The lower the better – high water has caused a lot of damage to my seawall (3)
- New reading should be determined by seawall and pier damage/disruption (2)
- Consider hiring a consultant to study and determine potential for damage to dam at various levels (2)
- Part of problem is too many rip-rap seawalls which allow no place for waves to go but back out causing more turbulence

### **Issue C: Boat Wake Enhancement**

Comments in support of prohibiting boats from enhancing their wakes

- Disallow big, heavier boats but grandfather existing ones (8)
- Unreasonable thrills of a few should not be allowed to endanger the continued functionality and integrity of the lake (5)
- People who want big, heavier boats should move to another much bigger lake (5)
- Problem will only get worse if not dealt with now (3)
- Feels like a tidal wave from some boats
- Not possible to stop people from buying bigger and heavier boats but enhancements should be prohibited
- Prohibit all wake boarding
- Set a wake height limit
- Boats pulling tubers and skiers (no matter what size) cause most of the problems so stop all towing at 4 or 5 pm.

Comments in support of allowing boats to enhance their wakes

- This is a recreation lake and people should be allowed to use devices to enhance wake. Adding more restrictions of any kind could have an adverse effect on property values. (4)
- Prohibiting the use of wake enhancement devices would cause unnecessary policing (4)
- Ban would be irrelevant since all boats can cause a huge wake at ¼ throttle with trim up (3)
- Allow enhancements but only in water over 15 ft deep or only when lake level is at or below 1.5.
- Investment in today's boat technology with ballasts should be protected; but use of sandbags, buckets and mechanical attachments could produce safety issues and should be prohibited.
- Problem is not caused by boats but by the high water level
- Use of wedges is OK but not added weights or inflatable bags
- Real cause of problem is boats cruising and zigzagging too close to buoys or even inside buoys
- The number of modified wake boats is only a small percentage of boats on the lake
- Long term protection of the shoreline is a much higher priority than prohibiting boats from making huge wakes

**Issue D: No Wake Hours**

- Sunset too subjective so make it a set time (3)
- Sunset tables are available from DNR so sunset is not too subjective (3)
- Should be “no wake” all the time to protect our environment and investment (2)
- Current rules have worked great for many years – don’t mess it up (2)
- Establish a few “quiet” days that ban the use of any motorized watercraft
- Set times that apply seven days a week
- Ski team should not be allowed to start practice until 9 on weekends
- Would like later “no-wake” time in the morning

**Issue D: No Wake Hours (continued)**

- Management district should set hours not the towns
- Would like “No-Wake” Sunday afternoons from 1 to 5 pm
- More time should be available for quiet fishing, canoeing, kayaking etc.
- Expanding no-wake hours will reduce the concentration of boats on lake at any one time resulting in fewer waves and less overcrowding
- Reducing no-wake hours would lead to more ski traffic and make the lakes more dangerous due to high traffic
- Other Suggested “No-Wake” Hours
  - Should be 10 am to 6 pm which is standard practice for many WI lakes
  - 11 am to 6 pm
  - 10 am to 5 pm

**General Comments**

- Need more buoys and better enforcement (10)
- Place buoys farther out from shore (8)
- Need more and better signage for “no-wakes” including floating signs in each part of lake (2)
- Too many boats on weekends
- No-wake is misunderstood and abused; boats need to slow down well before reaching no wake areas
- Require spotters to wave an orange flag if fallen rider in water
- Instead of prohibiting wakes, set a speed limit and prohibit skiing and tubing when lake is high

**Comments from Rice Lake Residents**

- No enforcement on Rice Lake and since water is so high, the park shoreline is seriously eroding (3)
- Towing of all kinds on Rice Lake should be prohibited. We need different rules for the two lakes (2)
- Like to see a gradual transition to allowing only non-motorized boats
- Weekend boaters do not realize the cost of repair, maintenance and excessive speed in Rice Lake