

North Lake Stewardship Committee
Phase 1 Survey Results
30 November 2019



A Special Project of the
North lake Management District

Introduction

A survey of landowners and “users” of North lake was conducted early this fall 2019 to assess the impact of the Safe Boater Guidelines introduced in early July 2019. The survey consisted of 10 questions covering awareness of and reaction to the boater guidelines. The survey questions were crafted to solicit simple yes/no answers to several topic areas and also to provide for open-ended comments by respondents. The survey is an effort to account for lake residents’ thoughts regarding a two-season trial of “Safe Boater Guidelines”. The survey questionnaire included a shortened version of the guidelines to assure validity regarding the survey item content. This report summarizes the Phase 1 survey results.

Note: A total of 228 surveys were sent to registered property owners on North Lake. As of this date, a total of 118 completed and legible surveys have been returned. This reflects a 52% return rate, considered an acceptable percent for use of survey data of this sort.

Phase 1

The present study summary captures nominal data percentages and provides categorical summaries of open-end responses. An appendix to this report captures all open-ended responses received and is available upon request. Survey data counts were independently reviewed by members of the North Lake Stewardship committee to assure the integrity of the statistical analysis.

Study Item Questions

1. Are you familiar with the Safe Boater Guidelines?
2. Can you briefly describe the type of boating you do on the lake? Please estimate hours per week or weekend use if possible.
3. Do you have any comments on the safe boater guidelines as you understand them?
4. Are there any guidelines you do not understand?
5. Are there any guidelines you would like changed and or eliminated? If so, which one(s) and why?
6. Do you feel the guidelines have had a positive impact on the Lake?
7. Do you feel the guidelines have had a negative effect on the Lake and if so, describe this?
8. Have the Safe Boater Guidelines changed the way you operate your vessels and or the way your kids and guests operate your boats?
9. Would you like the guidelines to become a permanent set of rules, enforced by laws, or remain voluntary?
10. Do you have any other comments you wish to make?

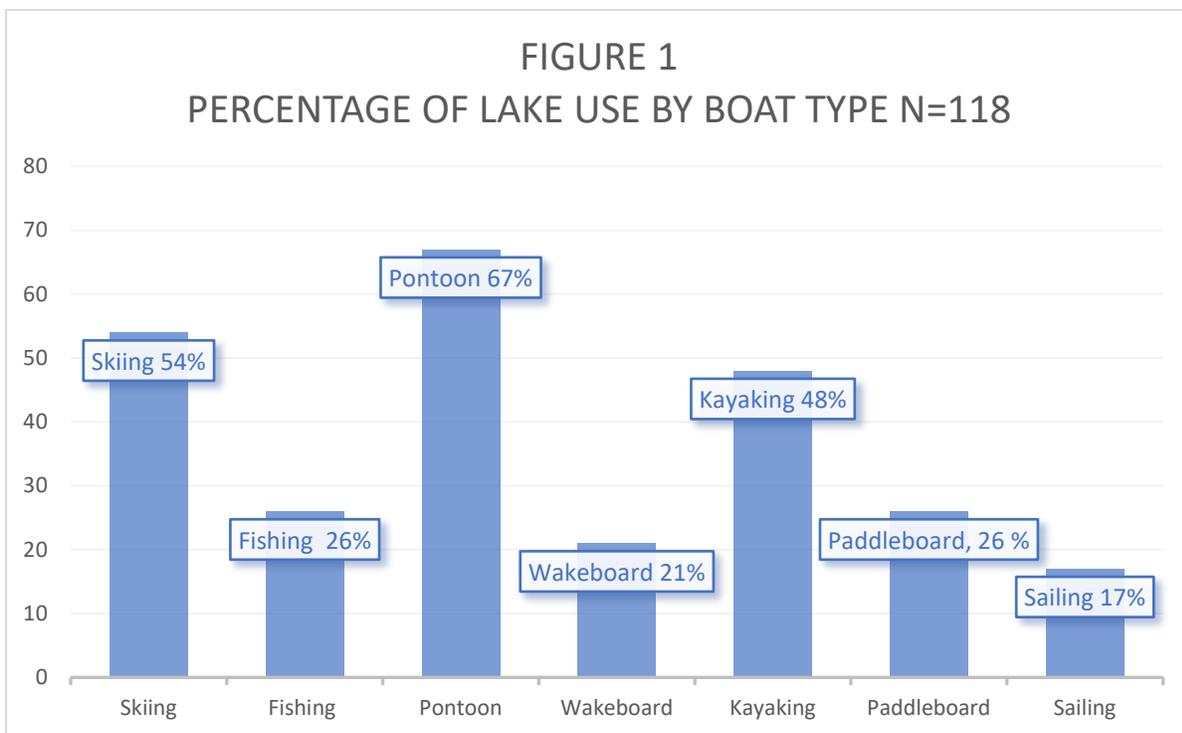
Study Item Number 1

“Are you familiar with the Safe Boater Guidelines”?

Ninety-nine % of survey respondents indicated YES and only 1% responded with NO. This result reflects that a significant number of North lake respondents are aware of the guidelines as written.

Study Item Number 2

“Can you briefly describe the type of boating you do on the lake? Please estimate hours per week or weekend use if possible.”

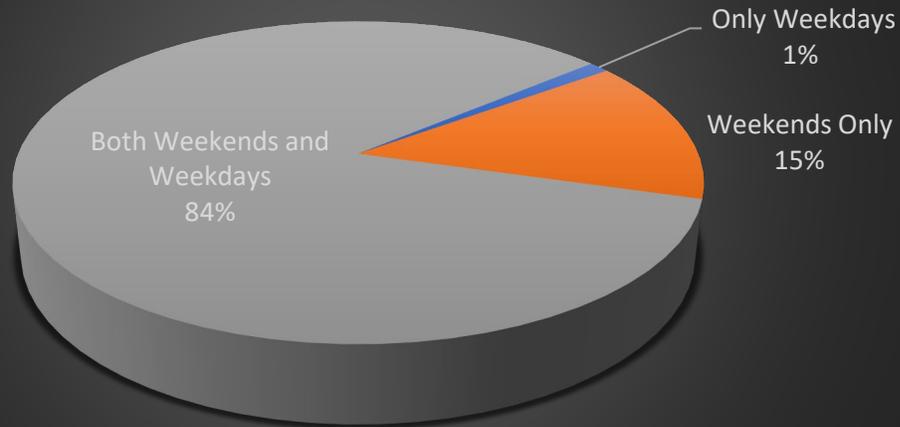


N= number (118) of respondents, some families provided multiple responses.

Figure 1 reflects boat type categories with a high percentage of pontoon boat use (67%) followed closely by waterskiing (54%) and then kayak use (48%). A relatively comparative spread of lake use is seen with fishing, paddleboards and wakeboard activity. Sailboat use is the lowest reported type category at 17%.

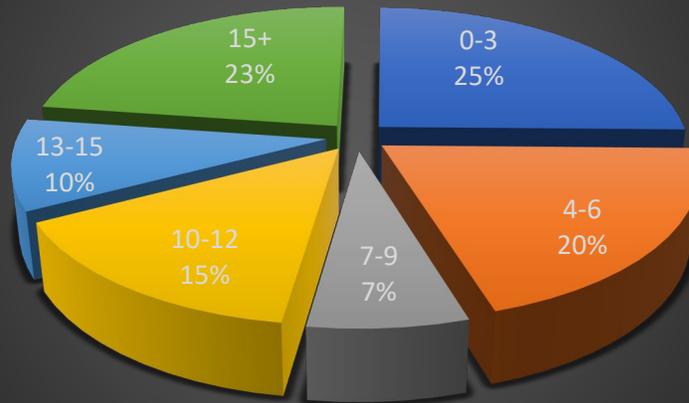
**Readers are reminded that these are boat type category choices, not an estimate of time of use.

Figure 2
Lake use by Days N=118



The data reflected in **Figure 2** shows the majority of lake use takes place throughout a 7 day week, including the weekends, with a combined estimate of 99% by respondents. A very small percentage of weekday only use is noted at 1%.

Figure 3
Lake use by hourly estimates bracket



The survey requested respondents to estimate hourly lake use by 3 hour categories. Figure 3 reveals a relatively even spread of hourly lake use per week with estimates between 3 hours and 6 hours. The data then suggests a spike of higher use estimates bracketed at 13 plus use hours weekly. (Combine light blue(25%) and green(23%) slices)

Study Item 3

“Do you have any comments on the safe boater guidelines as you understand them?”

Survey respondents provided a large positive response to the guidelines with N=53 (46%) indicating support for the “fair, common sense and logical” quality of the guidelines. Of interest, a very small number of respondents N=3 (.02%) responded to this survey item by commenting on the guidelines being “Too restrictive”

The study also revealed numerous categories of open-ended comments regarding reaction to the safe boater guidelines.

The 14 most frequent comments are summarized as follows:

1. Change the slow no wake times from 6:00 pm to a later hour eg.,(7:00 pm)
2. The guidelines should be adhered to all lake residents, some residents are ignoring them and that is not fair.
3. Wakeboard boats are disruptive to others and hurt the shorelines, they should be banned from the lake altogether, especially the “little” Lake.
4. The stop and drop water skiing rule is not understood
5. The guidelines are fair and reasonable and are good for the lake.
6. The guidelines reflect common sense, we like them.
7. The guidelines seem to be working
8. Slow no wake on weekends has done nothing to increase access for others
9. The guidelines were a great idea and are definitely needed
10. The guidelines are too restrictive
11. Many pontoon boats are not following the guidelines regarding distance from shore
12. The guidelines are “unenforceable”
13. The level of noise in the south bar is very annoying
14. The guidelines need a method of enforcement going forward

Study Item 4

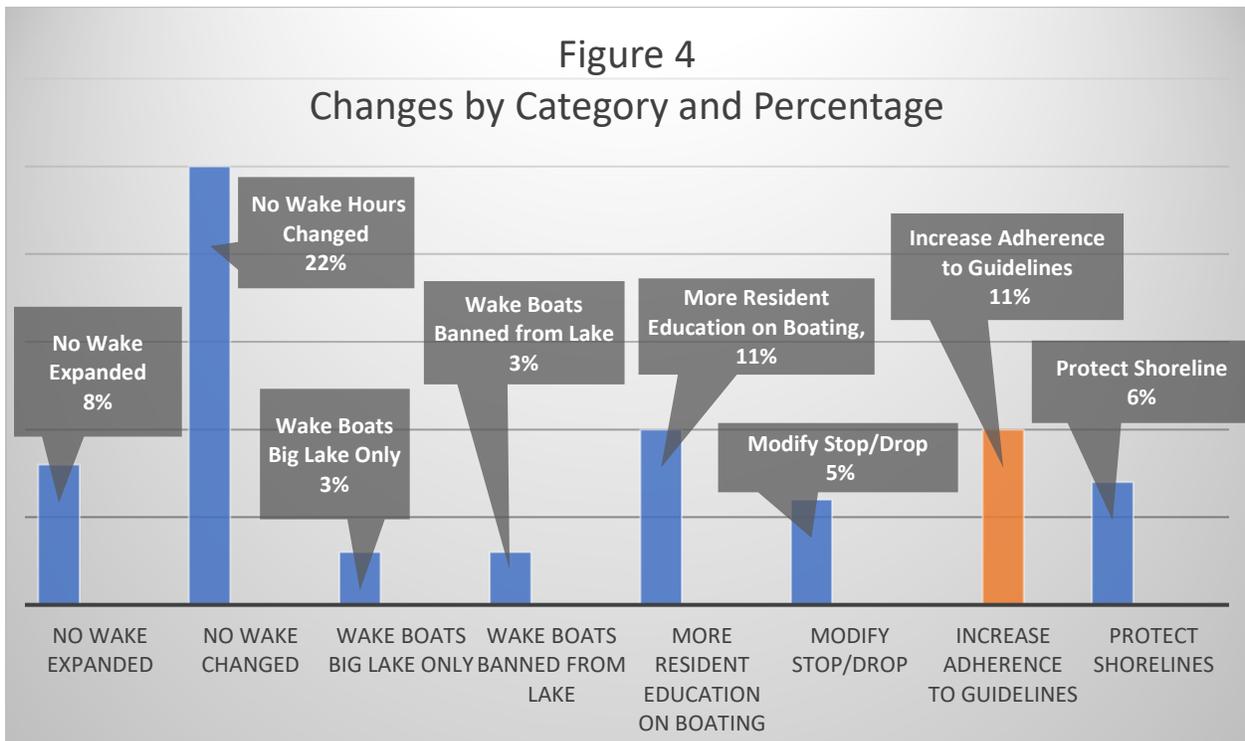
“Are there any guidelines you do not understand?”

An overwhelming number of respondents indicated they understood the guidelines. N=107 (90%). The remaining 11 surveys offered specific references to not understanding the “stop and drop” water ski techniques proposed in the guidelines.

Study Item 5

“Are there any guidelines you would like changed and or eliminated? If so, which one(s) and why?”

Survey respondents indicated that “No Change” in guidelines was preferred by a 34% bracket. Of interest, 8% of respondents left this response option “blank”. Survey results regarding recommended changes to the guidelines reveal an interesting array of suggestions as reflected in Figure 4.



Study Item 6

“Do you feel the guidelines have had a positive impact on the Lake?”

Respondents indicated that a positive outcome from the guidelines was felt at 66%. Interestingly, within this subgroup there were frequent requests for more compliance by all residents of the lake. A remarkably small percentage (.07%) indicated that the guidelines did not produce a positive outcome for them. Survey respondents provided a “blank” (no response) on 17% of the surveys. A final category of unsolicited comments provided the final 16%.

Study Item 7

“Do you feel the guidelines have had a negative effect on the Lake and if so, describe this.”

Survey respondents noted that 56% did not perceive the guidelines having negative effects on the Lake. Indeed, many respondents reported that guidelines were “long overdue” and “increased safety” in this grouping. A relatively small 13% of surveys reviewed indicated that a negative outcome was felt. When explanations were offered regarding this negative perception, respondents focused upon the bad feelings developing between neighbors as the primary negative variable. The remaining 31% of surveys were left blank for this survey item.

Study Item 8

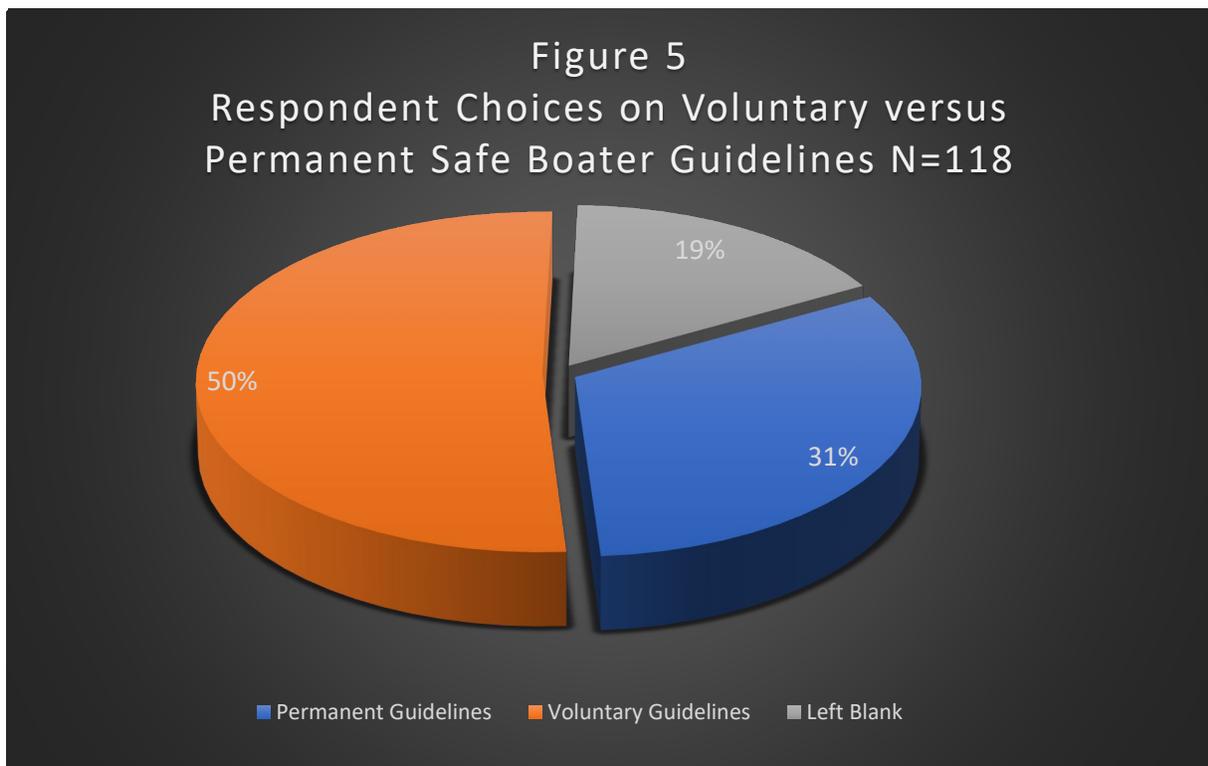
“ Have the Safe Boater Guidelines changed the way you operate your vessels and or the way your kids and guests operate your boats?”

The guidelines have changed the way 42% of boat users on North lake operate their boats. Of note, a frequent commentary was offered regarding this survey item noting that the guidelines positively impacted the way children who use the boats are more attentive, courteous and “safety conscious”. A smaller percentage of survey respondents (36%) indicated the guidelines produced no change in their boating conduct. A very small percent of survey respondents (2%) left this item blank. Seven of the survey respondents (.06%) indicated that they do not operate any kind of boats.

Study Item 9

“Would you like the guidelines to become a permanent set of rules, enforced by laws, or remain voluntary?”

As reflected in Figure 5, survey respondents were largely in favor of maintaining a “voluntary” compliance status regarding the safe boating guidelines. With 50% of survey respondents indicating a preference for this option, as opposed to permanent enforcement measures at 31%, a clear preference is noted. Importantly, there were many respondents in this survey who indicated that voluntary compliance should continue until a public boat launch is installed on North lake. 19% of respondents left this item blank.



Study Item 10

“Do you have any other comments you wish to make?”

Survey responses for this final question included 57% of the group who elected to offer no comment. The remaining comments are categorized into groupings based upon similarity. Every effort has been made to capture these important opinions (as quotes) offered by residents who took the time to offer them for consideration by all.

1. We need something permanent on the lake before the public launch.
2. We really should consider placing a size limit on the wake board boat size. The only thing we know for sure is that they are only going to get bigger.
3. We understand the dilemma of keeping everyone happy and its difficult for those who bought wake boats...But this is a new problem, water skiing has not been an issue. North lake is not a large lake and the wake boats affect the shore and the piers!
4. It would make sense if pontoon boats and cruising boats go in a counter clockwise pattern.
5. It is a benefit to all home owners to reduce shoreline erosion.
6. Keep stocking the perch!
7. NLMD should consider that as technology gets better, the wake boats will get bigger enhancements...what do we allow as a community?
8. If the guidelines are not enforced, they are meaningless and just cause more frustration.
9. We need rules in place before the public launch opens. These (guidelines)are very little inconvenience for huge improvement. Share the lake it is for all of us.
10. Limit the number of wake boats and their size...the lake is too small for anymore boats.
11. It amazes me how people are willing to disregard these guidelines and disregard the fact that we need to preserve the lake and cooperate with our neighbors.
12. These need to be enforced by law because of the coming public launch on the lake.
13. Great Survey...Great Work...God bless!
14. Sometimes there are noisy boats on the lake...like the Indy 500!
15. We very much appreciate the efforts and objectiveness of the lake stewardship committee.
16. Wakes are an issue, but the number 1 issue is water quality. Lighted spearing boats are a nuisance and the public launch will make this much worse.
17. Keep up the great work you are all doing!
18. I am not eager to see lots of enforcement on our lake.
19. Until we have public access, we should not restrict usage. Summer is short and our lake usage is far from excessive. We should all be respectful but arbitrary rules benefit some and hurt others and their unintended consequences are seldom considered.
20. Prospective buyers need to know these rules so that they buy the right kind of boat, which seems to be the reason for the new rules.

21. The people driving the rules won't even be on the lake in 5-10 years and presently hardly use the lake. They are harming the community.
22. The guidelines development process has been open and positive. Well thought through. Let's keep it that way.
23. It would be good to send a map to all showing sand bars and or put it on your website. A current or yearly topographical map would help.
24. Spend less money on weed cutting and seek other treatments.
25. I started out against a no wake time period. However, with some minor adjustments around time, it works out fine.
26. Self-policing makes so much more sense.
27. Increase speed limits to 40 mph.
28. I feel the no wake after 6:00 pm really hinders enjoyment of the lake.
29. Thank everyone for the hard work...now let's do something about the water quality and weeds.
30. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
31. Put someone in charge of enforcement or increase patrols from 5:30-7:00 pm on weekends.
32. Thanks for the mailing and the stamp!
33. More concerned about water quality and weeds.
34. We are so lucky this lake is relatively quiet.
35. Please clarify that PWC's should be operating under the same rules.
36. Thank you!!
37. The group did a good job pulling all this together...you will never be able to please everyone and there will always be people who won't follow the rules. Thanks for asking for input.

Summary

This analysis is offered to all residents in good faith. It is hoped that you all take the time to read the content and show the respect to those who took the time to respond to the survey they have earned. If there are data in this report you don't understand, we are happy to meet individually with you to explain it in further detail. If you have strong feelings on these very important community issues. . . we welcome you to join in the work of protecting our lake on the Stewardship Committee. Just give us a call to begin to "work the problem".

Respectfully Submitted
North Lake Stewardship Committee