

Dear BBL property owners,

The DNR released an updated review publication on the effects of wake boats on inland lakes in Michigan. Below is the link to this publication, as well as the state's recommendations for responsible wake boat use. At the bottom of this email, we have included maps of BBL that indicate distances between shores and water depths.

Bottom line: Big Bass Lake is not big enough or deep enough to withstand continued wake boating activities according to the DNR report.

Here are some key findings from the DNR publication:

- * The cumulative negative effects of wake boats on natural resources has the potential to lead to loss of habitat, resulting in the decline of aquatic ecosystems and angling opportunities.

- * Through direct observations by Division employees and feedback from the public, it has become clear that waves generated by wake boats create concerns about risks to aquatic natural resources.

- * In the past several years, applicants frequently have listed erosion from wake boats as part of their rationale for shoreline armoring. This reactive response of hardening shorelines, as opposed to proactively reducing the erosive forces at the shoreline caused by wake boats, will only lead to greater environmental degradation from armored shorelines due to wave reflection off these structures.

- * Existing boating law in Michigan states, “A person shall not operate a vessel on the waters of this state at a speed greater than slow–no wake or the minimum speed necessary for the vessel to maintain forward movement when within 100 feet of the shoreline where the water depth is less than 3 feet, as determined by vertical measurement, except in navigable channels not otherwise posted (NREPA 1994b).” Furthermore, reckless operation that disregards the safety or rights of others or endangers the property of others is illegal; causing damage with a vessel’s wake is a specific example of recklessness identified in the most recent Handbook of Michigan Boating Laws and Responsibilities (MDNR 2021). These laws are intended to both promote public safety and avoid property damage but were created prior to the commercialization and popularization of wake boats in Michigan in the early 2000s. As a result of the effects of wake boats outlined above, the Division concludes that the current 100-foot buffer is not sufficient to protect public trust aquatic resources.

- * Education and awareness campaigns are an important component of a comprehensive approach to protecting inland lakes from damage caused by wake boats. Providing operational recommendations into educational materials on responsible wake boat operation in boating safety classes, and providing informational flyers with these recommendations to new wake boat owners may improve awareness and implementation of best operation practices.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **MI Lakes & Streams Assoc** <info@mymlsa.org>

Date: Fri, Jul 28, 2023 at 5:23 PM

Subject: Special Boat Wake Update, July 2023

[View this email in your browser](#)

MDNR Officially Releases Boat Wake Report

**Fisheries Division,
[Report 37](#) is official
and better than ever**

by Melissa DeSimone, MLSA Executive Director

We saw the initial report last fall; it was released but then announced as a draft. After months of waiting, the report has been completely vetted by the full Michigan Department of Natural Resources and is ready for its official public debut. You can

read the full report [here](#). We found it to be even more comprehensive and useful than before.

The basic recommendations of the report are as follows:

1. Boats operating in wake-surfing mode or wake-boarding mode, during which boat speed, wave shapers, and/or ballast are used to increase wave height, are recommended to operate at least 500 feet from docks or the shoreline, regardless of water depth.
2. Boats operating in wake-surfing or wake-boarding modes are recommended to operate in water at least 15 feet deep.
3. Ballast tanks should be completely drained prior to transporting the

watercraft over land.

The recommended increase in distance from shore as well as the increased depth for operation during wake sports are crucial to the protection of our waterways. Concerns about boat wake damage to lakes and streams as well as safety issues for humans and wildlife have been mounting around the country as wake boats have gained popularity. Michigan Lakes and Streams Association has been working with other organizations from coast to coast that are seeing these issues. Limiting damage to shoreline and fishery habitats, eliminating the scouring of the bottomlands, and reducing the spread of invasive species are critically important to the preservation of our lakes and streams for future generations. We hope that boaters, lake residents, and policy makers will join us in further action based on the recommendations of MDNR Fisheries Division Report 37.

MLSA looks forward to working with stakeholders as well as government and agency officials of all levels to help preserve and protect our lakes and streams with common sense regulations. We appreciate the initiative and care of the Michigan DNR Fisheries Division in putting out this official report.

Ready to help us protect Michigan's waterways?

Michigan Lakes and Streams Association, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, statewide organization dedicated to the preservation, protection, and wise management of Michigan's vast treasure of inland lakes and streams.

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Michigan Lakes and Streams Association
PO Box 19615
Kalamazoo, MI 49019

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