

**Town of Spider Lake
Boating Ordinance Ad Hoc Committee (BOAHC) Minutes
Town Hall, 10896W Town Hall Road & via ZOOM
February 6, 2025**

MINUTES

1. Chair Berkopec called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm

PRESENT: Bob Berkopec (Chair), Michelle Keil (Clerk) Members: Ray Langer, Dave Mickelson, Tony Mornar, Tom Oatman, Craig Pagenkopf, Dave Thearin and John Trombello

- Chair Berkopec asked committee members to compile an estimated summary of the amount of time they have individually spent on BOAHC business since the committee's formation.

2. The committee reviewed and unanimously approved the Minutes of the January 21, 2025, meeting.

3. Clerk Keil reviewed the summary input to date from the BOAHC2024@gmail.com email account. (See the posted meeting slide deck for details.) Chair Berkopec asked committee members to send any additional conclusions they may draw from the input to Clerk Keil for compilation. Chair Berkopec also said the committee would include the final summary input of the emails as an appendix to the committee's final report.

The committee noted that although the 54 emails from 46 stakeholders represent valuable input, they do NOT comprise a large enough sample to constitute a statistically representative sample of property owners or the public. The committee asked if there were any scribed notes from the May 2024 Public Hearing about the Boating Ordinance. Clerk Keil will follow up with Town Chair Sheldon to see if such notes exist and, if so, provide them to the committee.

4. Committee sub-team reports:

- Definitions – Chair Berkopec led discussion on whether to recommend changing the ordinance to include Ghost Lake officially as a “Quiet Lake”, meaning to eliminate the “water sports hours” of 11-3 on Ghost Lake. The average depth of the lake is 5 feet. Concerns for public safety (due to the narrowness of the lake and near-surface hazards even at normal pool) and environmental degradation were discussed. The committee was unanimous in support of this recommendation. The committee also recommends the Town contact current property owners on the lake to confirm they concur with this change.
- The committee unanimously rejected the recommendation to add language to the ordinance prohibiting the use of PWCs on the Quiet Lakes (Lost Land, Teal and – potentially – Ghost Lakes). The committee felt this was unnecessary since violation of the ordinance in this regard has not been a significant problem in the past, and the Quiet Lakes will still have no water sports hours open for PWC use that exceeds the 10MPH speed limit.

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- Environmental Impacts – Clerk Keil suggested including an “environmental impacts” section in the 2/26/25 readout to the Board. This would establish the environmental portion of the TOSL-specific “local conditions” that the ordinance is tailored to address. Committee discussion ensued regarding:
 - Addressing multiple WDNR perspectives (recreation, fishery health, overall lake and wildlife health/protection/preservation, etc.)
 - The uniqueness of TOSL water bodies, especially ORWs, High Quality Waters (and watersheds), Loon populations, etc.
 - Impacts of traditional water skiing and PWC activities vs. wake-enhanced activitiesThe committee unanimously supported the inclusion of a section on environmental impacts to articulate a portion of the rationale for certain further recommendations that would follow.
- Wake Enhanced Activities – Ray and Dave led discussion regarding the following recommendations:
 - Immediately enact a stand-alone local ordinance prohibiting wake surfing and all activities that use “enhanced wakes”.
 - Enlist the help of the “Last Wilderness Alliance” to assist by providing legal and technical expertise (including 4 attorneys and a PHD Limnologist) and document templates.Significant discussion already occurred in previous committee meetings regarding many aspects of this issue, but some discussion ensued about the current status of statewide legislation on this issue. The committee unanimously approved both the above recommendations.
- Speed Limits – Tom and John led discussion regarding speed limits. Aspects of enforcement, safety, compliance, environmental impacts, all-hours PWC activity (if the limit is increased), the efficacy of placing additional Slow-No Wake buoys in environmentally sensitive areas of the lakes, etc were discussed. The committee considered the following recommendations from the Speed Limits sub-team:
 - Retain the current 10 m.p.h. speed limit boating ordinance (as defined in Section 5a of TOSL Ordinance #02 – 2024) The exception would be during the time of 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on those lakes specified in the ordinance where the speed limit would be lifted. The committee voted 8 “yea” and 1 “nay” on this recommendation, the “nay” suggesting an increase in the limit.
 - Lost Land Lake & Teal Lake Specific: The TOSL should recommend to Sawyer County / WDNR that “Slow No Wake” buoys be placed at the entrance points to the thoroughfare between Lost Land Lake and Teal Lake. The committee voted unanimously in favor of this recommendation, with one suggestion to consider also placing Slow-No Wake buoys at additional points in the ~1.2-mile Thoroughfare.

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- General discussion ensued about the Town’s response (Conditions Report, etc) to the WDNR’s response letter from M. Johansen, and about Ms. Johansen’s reply to the Town’s response. The committee agreed that its primary responsibilities are: (1) to gather and present objective facts and data regarding the Town’s “local conditions” and resources to the Town Board, and (2) to utilize this information as the basis for recommendations to the Town Board, thereby helping the Board fulfill its obligation to provide an ordinance that is tailored to local conditions in the TOSL. The committee also discussed the aspect of legal counsel regarding subject matter expertise specifically relevant to boating ordinances.
5. Chair Berkopec led a brief discussion regarding preparation for the 2/26/25 Readout to the Town Board. The rough outline and availability and willingness of possible presenters was discussed.
6. Chair Berkopec adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Keil, Clerk, BOAHC