

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Spider Lake
Health and Safety Committee
June 5, 2025 at 6:00pm
10896 W Town Hall Road (and by Zoom)

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm by Chair Quent Johnson. In attendance were members Mickelson, Lawton, Conroy (by Zoom) and Amery. Mark Johns also in attendance.
2. Johnson moved to approve the agenda with a correction to indicate June 5 meeting date, seconded by Amery. Motion carried.
3. Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Auto Aid Agreement

Motion by Amery to approve Auto Aid agreement in order to facilitate further discussions with Town of Round Lake, and to expedite clarification and agreement on remaining due diligence issues, seconded by Mickelson. Motion carried.

Discussion:

Quent Johnson provided an overview of a proposed Auto Aid agreement between the Towns of Spider Lake and Round Lake. This will formalize organizational collaboration and cost-sharing between the Towns when they jointly respond to fire and EMS events. Issues relating to Health and Safety Committee inputs to this agreement were discussed. The decision to approve was based on the assumption that negotiations with the Town of Round Lake will include the resolution of any remaining legal or administrative questions.

5. Proposed Wake Enhanced Activity Ordinance and Condition Report

Motion made by Johnson to recommend to the TOSL Board of Supervisors submission of the Condition Report to Support an Ordinance Restricting Artificially Enhanced Wakes in the Waters of the Town of Spider Lake, Sawyer County and the draft TOSL ordinance entitled Restricting Certain Artificial Wake Enhancement to Wisconsin DNR, seconded by Mickelson. Motion approved.

Discussion:

The documents supporting the above ordinance are under review at the TOSL Board level. Quent Johnson introduced their referral to the Committee for consideration of issues relevant to the Town's statutory responsibility to protect health and safety within our community. Dave Mickelson summarized excerpts of the BOAHC recommendations concerning impacts of wake enhanced activities (see "Wake Boat (Enhanced Wake) Essential Elements, attached).

A summary of facts and the conclusions reached during discussion by the Committee include:

- The ordinance does not ban the use of "wake boats." It prohibits the use of watercraft to generate enhanced wakes. There are no limits to the use of wake boats for water skiing, cruising, etc. provided they are not configured to generate an enhanced wake.

- The proposed ordinance and the report address important health and safety factors and are consistent with similar ordinances implemented by other towns in Wisconsin, now numbering over 50.
- The depth and fetch characteristics of lakes in the Town of Spider Lake make them vulnerable to negative impacts of wake enhanced activities.
- Elements of ordinance enforcement as presented in the BOAHC report were discussed, with no action by the Health and Safety Committee taken at this time.
- Risks posed to personal safety and environmental health (e.g. mercury release, algae blooms, AIS, loss of habitat) were discussed at length.
- In conclusion, safety and health concerns were deemed to be both significant and to fall within the Committee's purview, resulting in the recommendation to the Board (as above) to proceed with steps directed toward implementation.

6. Lake buoys

Motion made by Mickelson to proceed with DNR application to introduce buoys in the waterway between Lost Land and Teal Lakes, seconded by Conroy. Motion carried.

Discussion:

Mark Johns outlined his recommendation that an ordinance be implemented to improve navigational safety and habitat protection in the channel that connects Teal and Lost Land lakes. He commented on the need for navigational buoys in the area, based on findings from the BOAHC report and his 50 years as a resident on that body of water. Discussion followed on whether this waterway is considered to be a river by the DNR. If so, this may mean the DNR has exclusive authority to manage navigational safety and/or the placement of buoys, and designation of the area as a slow/no wake zone. Michelle Conroy volunteered to research the issue including information on the DNR application process.

As there was no other business coming before the Committee for discussion, a motion to adjourn was made by Johnson, seconded by Mickelson. Motion carried.

Adjournment at 7:50pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Bill Amery, Vice Chair

Wake Boat (Enhanced Wake) Essential Elements

Enhanced Wakes pose the single greatest threat to the health of the Spider Chain of Lakes.

1. Prop Wash scours the bottom releasing sediment, phosphorus, and mercury into the upper water column creating an environment for algae bloom.
2. Prop Wash destroys native aquatic plants creating an underwater desert and opening the lake bottom for Aquatic Invasive Species.
3. When the silt makes its way to shore it covers critical spawning beds.
4. Enhanced wakes carry 4-9 times the power and energy into our shoreline, destroying plants and Loon nests.
5. These huge waves drive all other watercraft off the lake and can capsize kayaks, paddleboards and small fishing boats. They are responsible for numerous injuries on Wisconsin lakes.
6. There are 15,000 lakes in Wisconsin with only 97 named Outstanding Resource Waters. Spider Chain of Lakes and Teal Lake are 2 of the 97.
7. Ballast water from wake boats can never be fully empty and can transport AIS (Eurasian Water Milfoil and Zebra Mussels) lake to lake.

The BOAHC Committee recommended the exclusion approach to address this issue. Draft an ordinance to exclude all “wake enhanced activities”. The Last Wilderness Alliance (LWA) has already drafted a potential ordinance for the Town of Spider Lake to review.