



Lake Soundings

The Gilmore Lake Association Newsletter - Spring 2025



Wake boats are increasingly popular on Wisconsin lakes, but concerns over environmental damage is driving new local ordinances.

Making Waves: Wake Boats Stir Controversy on Wisconsin Lakes

With no state law in place, local towns take the lead with new ordinances

Wake boats are growing in popularity on Wisconsin's lakes. While many enjoy the thrill of wakesurfing and wakeboarding, others worry about the impacts on shorelines, aquatic habitats, and public safety. In the absence of statewide regulation, a growing number of towns are passing their own ordinances to manage wake-enhanced boating on local waters.

Wake boats are specialized powerboats fitted with ballast tanks that fill with water to increase the boat's weight and displacement, which creates large surfable wakes. These waves—often two to three feet high—allow riders to wakeboard, wakesurf, or even surf without a tow rope. However, there are concerns that on smaller or shallower lakes, the big

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Important: Annual Meeting Date Change, Boat Parade Schedule

The 2025 Gilmore Lake Association Annual Meeting has been rescheduled for 10:00am on **Saturday, June 28** at the Jack Link Aquatic & Activity Center. Free membership lunch to follow. This year's Annual Boat Parade will be at 1:00pm on **July 4** (rain date is the following day). The parade theme will be "Born to be Wild."

President's Message

Dear Lake Neighbors,

I hope your summer is off to a great start!

I want to encourage everyone to attend the GLA annual meeting. Please note the DATE CHANGED to Saturday, June 28 at 10am at the Jack Link Aquatic &

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Gilmore Lake Association Board

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President: Fran McCloskey
franmccloskey@yahoo.com

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silverwing83@gmail.com

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Bill Huelsman
bill@bergmanagement.com

Daryl Iverson
iversondj@hotmail.com

Joan Mellor
jmellor@comcast.net

Kristi O'Kane
iamkristiokane@gmail.com

Larry Stokes
larrystokes@comcast.net

Committee Chairs:

AIS/Eurasian Milfoil: Larry Stokes

Membership: Kristi O'Kane

Fundraising: Joan Mellor

Website: Jim Schneider

Newsletter: Dave Walsh
iamdwalsh@gmail.com

President's Message from page 1...

Activity Center. There is a packed agenda with updates on the milfoil monitoring and control effort and a guest speaker on improving your shoreline to help keep Gilmore Lake healthy. A free lunch will follow the meeting.

At the Spring Meeting of the GLA Board, the group decided that increasing the size of the board and changes to officer positions will help the Association greatly. Having more board members will increase GLA member participation in our work, ease transition of board and officer positions, and foster idea-sharing, openness, and inclusivity for all.

At the Annual Meeting, we will discuss and vote on bylaw changes necessary to increase the number of board positions (currently limited to seven) and add officer roles and term limits. If you are interested in serving as a board member, please let me know. This is a great way to meet neighbors, serve our lake community, and it's actually fun!

I'm looking forward to another beautiful summer on the lake, and I hope to see you all at the Annual Meeting. As always, please reach out to me or other board members if you have any questions or ideas to share.

Fran McCloskey
President

The logo for Boondocks Coffee + Cafe features a silhouette of a forest with two people in a canoe. Below the illustration is a shield-shaped banner with the text "BOONDOCKS COFFEE + CAFE" and "MINONG, WI" below that. At the bottom of the shield are two crossed paddles.

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The logo for Patrick Custom Homes & Realty features a green shamrock to the left of the word "PATRICK" in a large, serif font. Below "PATRICK" is the text "CUSTOM HOMES & REALTY" in a smaller, sans-serif font. At the bottom, there is a green banner with the phone number "715-466-5600" and the text "Jensen - Sundquist Insurance" in a bold, sans-serif font. To the left of the phone number is a small logo with the letters "JS" inside a shield.

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Wake boating from page 1...

wakes and waves can erode shorelines, harm natural habitats, and stir up—and spread—invasive species like Eurasian watermilfoil.

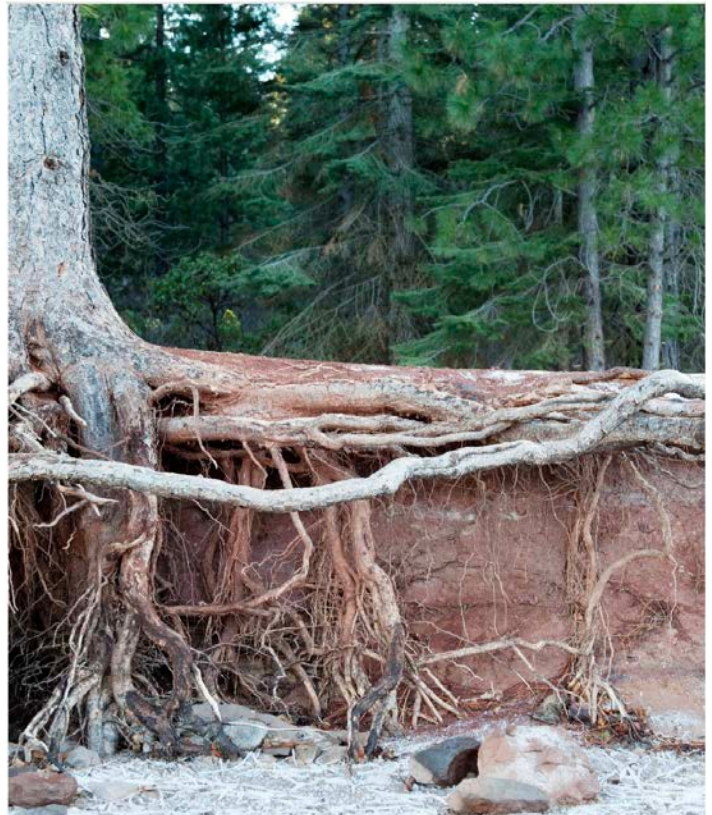
A University of Minnesota study in 2022 found that wake boats in surf mode create wakes 3-12 times greater than ski boats. This means that wake boats should stay at least 600 feet from shore to give the waves enough space to dissipate to levels similar to that of a typical ski boat operating 200 feet from shore.

"We have seen only a few wake boats on Gilmore Lake," said Fran McCloskey, President of the Gilmore Lake Association. "But their potential impact is a concern because Gilmore Lake is a small and relatively narrow lake and less than eight feet deep in many areas."

The large wakes and propeller from these powerful boats can disrupt fish habitats by uprooting aquatic vegetation that serves as a spawning ground essential for maintaining fish populations. Studies show up to 40% plant biomass loss in shallow zones from wake boat activity. Wake boats can also erode shorelines significantly faster than natural waves, resulting in destabilized banks, increased sedimentation, and reduced water quality and clarity.

Wake Boat Regulations in Minong and Wisconsin

Neither the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) or the Town of Minong has established any regulations specifically regarding the



A University of Minnesota study found that wake boats can create wakes 3-12 times larger than regular ski boats. The big waves can erode shorelines and disrupt fish habitats and spawning grounds.

use of wake boats. These watercraft are currently subject to general boating laws that apply to all motorized vessels:

- **Observe no-wake zones.** All boats must operate at a slow-no-wake speed (the slowest speed to maintain steerage) within 100 feet of any shoreline, dock, pier, raft, or restricted area on any lake.

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Wake boating from page 3...

- **Avoid hazardous wakes.** It is illegal to operate a motorboat in a way that creates a hazardous wake or wash that endangers other boats or lake users.
- **Prevent spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS).** All boats must drain all water from bilges, ballast tanks, and live wells immediately after leaving a waterbody to help prevent the spread of AIS.

The lack of state action has prompted 34 Wisconsin towns to pass their own ordinances on wake boating, including several near Minong.

- **Hayward** prohibits boats from creating “elevated wakes” – waves over 24 inches high – within 700 feet of any shoreline, dock, pier or raft. The law bans the use of ballast tanks, mechanical hydro-foils, uneven loading, and operating a transition (plowing) speed on all lakes within the town, regardless of size.
- **Chicog**, located about 10 minutes west of Minong, has passed an ordinance restricting wake boats in surf mode on Lower McKenzie Lake. This law prohibits use of ballast tanks/bags, wake-enhancing fins and any operation that causes the boat to ride in an artificially bow-high manner that increases wake size.

“The Minong Town Lakes Committee is encouraging the town of Minong to adopt wake boat laws similar to what neighboring communities have passed,” said Fran.



The Wakesports Reform Coalition supports regulations requiring wake boats to operate at least 700 feet from shore and more than 500 feet from other boats or lake users.

According to the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, a Wakesports Reform Coalition is calling on the state legislature to place statewide restrictions on wake boats. The coalition has 76 member groups, including the Last Wilderness Alliance, Walleyes for Tomorrow, Wisconsin’s Green Fire, Wisconsin Lakes, and Wisconsin Wildlife Federation. The groups support rules requiring wake boating to take place at least 700 feet from shore and more than 500 feet from other boats or lake users.

Most significantly for Gilmore Lake, the coalition is seeking to ban wake boating in waters less than 30 feet deep. The deepest spot on Gilmore is only 36 feet. The lake’s average depth is 16 feet and many areas of the lake are less than six feet deep.



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Gilmore Lake Association

The Gilmore Lake Association (GLA) is committed to protecting our lake and your investments through the proactive management of Eurasian Water Milfoil and monitoring water quality in our lake. By joining the GLA, your dues help support this work. Use the QR Code or fill out the form below and mail it, along with your \$25 check or money order to:



Gilmore Lake Association
P.O. Box 188
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PLEASE SIGN ME UP! 2025 MEMBERSHIP IN THE GILMORE LAKE ASSOCIATION

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