

Location: Pike Lake Fire Hall

Attendance: 26 (Based on Sign-In Sheet)

Members: 21

Non-Members: 5

Presenter:

Mike Ida – President, PLCLA

Question and Answer Period – Fish Passage

Mike spent the initial minutes of the listening session addressing questions regarding the fish passage.

Q1. Does the Association need to support the fish passage in order for the USFS to proceed with the project?

A1. It is possible that the Forest Service would pursue the project without Association support, but the Association support may help with the approval of grant dollars for the project. The Association will vote in June 2024 at the annual meeting whether to support the fish passage or not.

Q2. Regarding voting on the fish passage at the annual meeting in June, do you need to be present to vote?

A2. Per the current By-Laws, you must be present to cast a ballot at the annual meeting. The Board is reviewing the By-Laws currently and would like to get the By-Laws changed so that absentee ballots can be cast when votes are taken. It is hoped to accomplish this before the Association votes on the fish passage at the June 2024 annual meeting. The final membership vote will be binding.

The Board has been investigating the use of internet meetings using Zoom, but due to internet speed at the Fire Hall, this is not possible. Any improvement in internet service would be up to the Town of Fifield.

Q3. Would the installation of the fish passage cause lake levels to be reduced?

A3. There is potential for lake levels to be reduced. The USFS needs to clarify the height of the dam and determine the water level reduction. The DNR could mandate a constant flow of water over the weir.

Mike will forward ongoing questions asked regarding the fish passage to the USFS and ensure their answers are posted on Facebook and on our website at <https://pikelakechain.net>. Nick Berndt from the USFS may potentially join us in January as a follow up to our August 2023 listening session.

Ordinance 28

Mike Ida presented the high points of Ordinance 28 which was put in place in August of 1988:

- Amik is not included in Ordinance 28 but in other ordinances currently authored by the Town of Fifield Board.
- The Ordinance includes a slow no wake requirement before 10:00 am and after 5:00 pm with waterskiing being permitted between the hours of 10:00 am and 5:00 pm.
- No trash may be thrown into the lake.

Mike also presented the research he had done relative to the 2,100 lakes in Wisconsin which are greater than 50 acres in size. One-fifth of these lakes had local boating ordinances according to the DNR regulations. These ordinances addressed waterskiing hours, speed limits, slow no wake zones, etc. Some of these lakes were located in Price County. The information below was found on the DNR website:

| Lake/Township | Ordinance Authored In | Waterskiing Hours | Lake | Ordinance Authored In | Waterskiing Hours |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Musser Lake | 1999 | 9 am to 6 pm | Diamond Lake | 1997 | 10 am to 6 pm |
| Lac du Flambeau Township (all lakes) | 1973 | 10 am to 7 pm | Crane Chase Lake | 2000 | 10 am to 5 pm |
| Stone Lake | 2006 | 11 am to 3 pm | Dardis Lake | 1984 | 9 am to 3 pm |
| Town of Cloverland (all lakes) | | 9 am to 6 pm | Town of Presque Isle (all lakes) | | 10 am to 5 pm |
| Manitowish Waters (all lakes) | | 9 am to 7 pm | Town of Conover (all lakes) | | 9am to 6 pm |

The last member survey performed on this subject was in 2016 and was distributed to residents of the Pike Lake Chain Fire District #2. This survey addressed waterskiing and whether to change or abolish Ordinance 28. The survey showed that 67% of respondents wanted the current waterskiing hours to remain 10 am to 5 pm. Several in attendance indicated that they had not received the survey in 2016 while others confirmed their receipt of the survey. Future surveys should ensure all eligible residents receive the survey.

The DNR has no "special" regulation addressing waterskiing. The current DNR regulations indicate waterskiing is allowed from sunrise to sunset on lakes without ordinances to the contrary.

Questions

Q1. What is the purpose of the current regulations (Ordinance 28)?

A1. The Board is unaware of the origins of the Ordinance so can only speculate it is related to fishing.

Q2. Should we suggest that Ordinance 28 includes Amik?

A2. Amik is in another jurisdiction yet covered by other Fifield Township ordinances.

Q3. How many members does the Association have? There are less than 30 individuals present.

A3. The Association has 172 members.

Q4. Why does the Town of Fifield seek the Pike Lake Chain Lake Association recommendation?

A4. The Town of Fifield recognizes the Board of the Association as the official elected governing body for our lake community.

Comments

My husband and I bought our place because this was a fishing Chain. If skiing hours are lengthened, extend it into the afternoon rather than the morning.

After 5:00 pm hours are needed for working individuals to enjoy the lake by skiing.

Would like the 10:00 am ski hours left as is. Ski boats rock my boat while fishing. Boat rocking may have been the original reason for the Ordinance.

Fishermen in search of fishing sites may also cause the boats to rock.

No preference should be given to fishermen.

As a recreational user, I would see enough space to fish outside of the recreational use area.

An attempt to enforce only Section 3, the waterskiing portion of Ordinance 28, is unfair. If the entire Ordinance is not enforced, it should be changed or abolished in its entirety.

Waterskiing hours should be extended to sunrise to sunset as state law is or at a minimum be extended to 7:00 pm and then reviewed later for possible extension to state law time periods.

Lakes that have restricted waterskiing hours are a minority, a very small minority. While viewing signage posted at boat landings on 6 area lakes, I found only one lake with restrictions. That sign was posted as a "Courtesy Code" not a town ordinance.

- Amber Lake – no restrictions. I spoke with a property owner on the lake and he said hours were restricted to 6:00 pm, but no one followed the rules and about 6 years ago the restrictions were abolished.
- Butternut Lake – no restrictions.
- Newman Lake – no restrictions on this small lake of 90 acres.
- Phillips Chain – no restrictions.
- Solberg Lake – The Solberg Lake Association has a "Courtesy Code" posted which states, "Recommended waterskiing and jet ski hours 10 am to 5 pm. Quiet hours please – after 10 pm." It goes on to say "Waterskiing and jet skiing – not permitted after 7 pm."
- Squirrel Lake – no restrictions.

No other form of boating activity has hours of restriction enforced on the lake, why does waterskiing have to be the only activity restricted.

Waterskiing is weather dependent. Winds over 10-15 mph make for poor skiing conditions. The winds calm down after 5:00 pm, that is when it first gets nice on many days.

If I were a full-time resident and came home from work at 5:00 pm on a weekday, I could not take my kids or go waterskiing myself even though there may be only a few other boats out on the lake, why?

The Pike Lake Chain is a large body of water, almost 2,000 acres. Other than holiday weekends the boating activity on the chain is very low. There should be enough room for everyone to enjoy their recreational interest responsibly at the same time. I have not seen anyone waterski on Rice Creek and there is very little waterskiing done on Turner Lake.

Amik Lake is not part of the Ordinance and does not have restrictions on it. Is anyone complaining about waterskiing on Amik Lake.

Extended waterskiing hours may spread out the activity over a greater time period and reduce the amount of traffic between 10:00 am and 5:00 pm on the busy holiday weekends.

The waterskiing season is very limited. Maybe 3 months and many weekends it is too cold, rainy or windy to waterski so I do not see where it is creating conflict.

The amount of people taking advantage of the earlier or later hours will be limited. People do not water ski for a very long period so the traffic during the extended time period would be minimal. We will not see an influx of additional boats to the Chain because other area lakes already have unrestricted hours for waterskiing.

I do not see the extra waterskiing hours having any negative impact on someone else's enjoyment of the lake when other boating activities are currently permitted before and after the current waterskiing hours.

The 12 mph no wake must be eliminated.

Tubing is considered as waterskiing under the Ordinance. The lakes must be shared with the fishermen.

Expand ski hours and do not limit by months. Apply similarly to skiing and fishing.

Limiting activities, like waterskiing ordinances, are common. For example, I cannot operate my ATV on the USFS trails north of Round Lake because an ordinance states foot traffic only.

What about designating one lake and not the other?

What if we keep hours as is but disallow fishing from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm?

The majority felt the 12 mph should go away.

Tweak hours. More in the am and in the pm. Willing to compromise.

Attendees at this morning's meeting should not determine the Board's recommendation.

A survey would be problematic as 67% of those eligible to respond don't ski. The result would be the same as the current Ordinance. Opinions are important to understand.

The survey could discern which group the individual is answering for – skier or angler to help in the analysis of the results.

Didn't receive a notice for this morning's meeting. Does not have Facebook or email. Heard of the meeting from a friend.

Be sure you communicate any change to your email address. Some emails that are sent bounce back undelivered.

What is the harm? Making a mountain out of a mole hill. Board make a decision.

Make the waterskiing hours 10:00 am to 7:00 pm or even 9:00 am to 7:00 pm.

Perform additional fact finding using 100-acre lakes or greater for other ordinances. If you weren't in attendance, would you care if the Ordinance changed?

I spent 92 days on the lake fishing this season. We have to share resources.

Both sides are right. Someone must make a decision knowing one or the other group may have concerns. The more individuals the Board hears from the better.

Closing Remarks

The Board needs to establish a baseline for the Pike Lake Chain residents understanding the changes that have taken place over the last 15 years. Boats are different (larger and more powerful), many properties are now VRBO/Airbnb and occupied a much greater percentage of time than previously, there is new building going on, etc. We are changing.

As a Board, we would like to ensure we hear as many voices as possible on this issue. We could have another listening session if desired. The Board might even discuss the possibility of having a special mailing.

A deadline to act must be set taking into consideration the Town of Fifield time required to make a decision on this matter. This could take place quickly or could be delayed. The Board will discuss this deadline.

You can email your questions/comments to President@pikelakechain.net or Communications@pikelakechain.net

Please refer to the Association's website as your source of information.

Session concluded at 11:05 am.