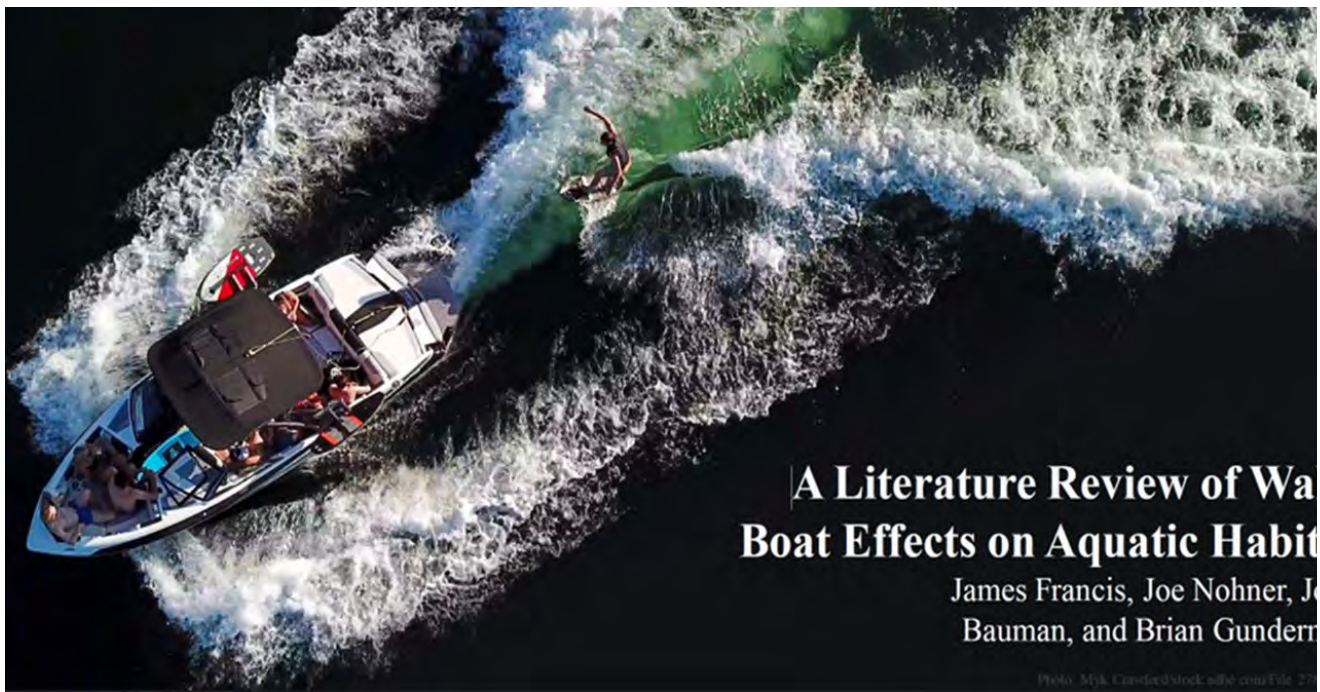


# LOLA NEWSLETTER

LAKE ORION LAKE ASSOCIATION  
FEBRUARY 2024

## Top Story In This Newsletter: Effects of High Energy Wake on Lake Ecosystem



### A Literature Review of Wake Boat Effects on Aquatic Habitat

James Francis, Joe Nohner, J  
Bauman, and Brian Gunderr

Photo: MjK, Canva/stock.adobe.com/121

## Highlights of the DNR Study & Recommendation:

**DNR makes recommendation on wake boat use to minimize impact on shoreline erosion, sediment resuspension, and the transport of invasive species. Highlights in this issue:**

- The DNR study concluded that wake boats operating in high energy wake mode significantly increase shoreline erosion and sediment resuspension.

· To minimize the negative impact of the high energy wakes, the DNR has made the following recommendation for use in high energy wake mode:

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 always be drained prior to transporting the watercraft over land.

***The following is a summary of the Wake Boat Lunch and Learn attended on Friday December 1, 2023 in East Lansing by members of the LOLA Board. It was prepared by George Dandalides, LOLA President, and presented to the LOLA Board for information.***

This event titled Current Perspectives on Wake Boats was sponsored by the Michigan Chapter North American Lake Management Society (McNalms) and held at Brody Hall on the MSU campus in East Lansing. There were three speakers who presented different perspectives on wake boats and their impact on lake welfare and other boaters. Those speakers included:

- Nicki Polan, Executive Director, Michigan Boating Industries Association (MBIA)
- Ethan Hillier, Midwest Government Affairs Manager, Water Sports Industry Association (WSIA)
- Dr. Joe Nohner, Inland Lakes Habitat Analyst & Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership Coordinator, Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division

The first two presentations were made from the perspective of the boating industry and represent a view coming from boat manufacturers, boat and marine dealers, and the marine service industry. Their recommendation was based on a study (Cotty Fay Study) and concludes with a recommendation that wake boats being operated in high energy wake modes stay at least 200 feet from shorelines, docks, and other boats. They further recommend draining of ballast tanks prior to trailering, operators keep music at reasonable levels, and minimize repetitive passes. They acknowledge a minimum water depth for operation, but didn't feel it necessary as a recommendation because "wake boats cannot operate in shallow water and operators naturally seek out deep water". They are supportive of voluntary best operating practices through boater education, and not in support of any new or revised laws. Both the MBIA and the WSIA proposed actively communicating their recommendation through education at boat shows, dealership seminars, literature including hang tags on new boats at shows and dealerships. signage at boat launches. email and direct mailings. and social

media.

The next presentation was made by the Michigan DNR from the perspective of the overall welfare of our lakes and corresponding ecosystems. The DNR considered twenty studies on the impact of wake boats for use in their analysis. Of the twenty studies considered, they narrowed it down to nine which they used in their analysis and resulting recommendation. The Cotty Fay Study (the only one used by the boating industry) was considered by the DNR but not one of the nine used in their analysis due to concerns in the study's approach. The DNR recommends that wake boats being operated in high energy wake modes operate at a minimum distance of 500 feet from docks or the shoreline, regardless of water depth, they operate in a minimum of 15 feet of water, and ballast tanks are drained prior to transporting over land. The DNR's communication is limited to DNR publications, the DNR website, and seminars such as this one. There are no plans to communicate further, and the presenter was specific in saying this is something that really needs to be communicated to our Lansing representatives (by the public) for action at a state level.

The following were the take-aways from the presentations made and the follow-up questions from the seminar:

- The boating industry has made a recommendation based on a study that the DNR found invalid.
- The DNR has also made a recommendation based on nine studies out of twenty considered.
- The two recommendations are very different, with the DNR's being more comprehensive and more stringent.
- The boating industry proposed communicating their recommendation through boat shows, manufacturers, dealerships, email and direct mailings, and social media.
- There is no clear link between what the DNR is recommending and any potential action in Lansing.

The LOLA Board has discussed the issue of increased wake boat traffic on Lake Orion and the impact of shoreline erosion, water quality, and boater safety, with the following discussion areas for action:

- We have met with Donni Steele, our District Representative in Lansing, expressing our concern and seeking her assistance at the state level.
- We are investigating the possibility of modifying the existing Special Lake Rules for Lake Orion to include specifics for high energy wake boating.
- As we plan our LOLA Annual General Membership Meeting, this topic will be

one of the major discussion points. The LOLA General Membership Meeting is currently scheduled for Thursday, June 15<sup>th</sup> at the Orion Township Offices.

**The following is the link to the MCNALMS website where copies of the presentations are available for review:**

<https://www.mcnalms.org/lunch/>

**Lake Orion Lake Association (LOLA)**

**Email:** [lolainfomail@gmail.com](mailto:lolainfomail@gmail.com)

**Website:** <https://lolainfo.org/>

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