



HEADWATERS CHAPTER



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LAST WILDERNESS ALLIANCE



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## Wisconsin Lakes Coalition Shares Policy Positions to Protect Wisconsin's Lakes

Madison... A statewide coalition focused on protecting Wisconsin's lakes is releasing its policy positions as it prepares for a statewide educational campaign to preserve Wisconsin's lakes.

The coalition represents Wisconsin fishing experts/enthusiasts, advocates for local control, lake property landowners, sailors, those concerned with spreading invasive species, and others. All are concerned regarding the devastating impacts of wake-enhanced boating on Wisconsin's glacial lakes.

Members of the coalition include: First Chapter Muskies, Inc., Walleyes for Tomorrow, Headwater Chapter Muskies, Inc., Diamond Lakers, Inc., Trout Unlimited Inc., Yahara Fishing Club, Vilas County Lakes and Rivers Association, Lakes at Stake Wisconsin, Last Wilderness Alliance, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, Wisconsin Lakes Association, Wisconsin's Green Fire, and Sawyer County Lakes Forum, Buffalo County Conservation Alliance, and Mondovi Conservation Club.

The coalition has coalesced around a set of principles it believes are essential to enact as statewide minimums to protect our lakes and rivers.

### The coalition's principles include:

- **700 Feet From Shore** - Wake-enhanced boating activities should occur at least 700' from any shoreline.
- **30-Foot Depth** – Wake-enhanced boating activities should occur in water depths of no less than 30 feet.
- **Prevent Invasive Species in Ballast Tanks** - Boats moving from lake to lake must have proof of decontaminated ballast tanks before entering lakes
- **Local Control** – Local municipalities' existing right to enact and maintain local ordinances that are more restrictive than these state minimums shall be preserved



"Wisconsin Trout Unlimited recognizes the need for reasonable restrictions on the use of wake board boats to protect our water resources and to provide recreational opportunities where it's deemed appropriate," stated Mike Kuhr, Advocacy Chair, Wisconsin Trouts Unlimited.

James Olson continued by saying, "I have fished muskies for 75 years and been President of Chapter 8 of Muskies, Inc and a former legal Counsel to Muskies, Inc. Although I am concerned about the extreme danger of enhanced wakes to muskie fisherman who stand in the boat to cast, the biggest issue is the fish habitat destruction caused by scouring lake bottoms and spreading invasive species."

Walleyes For Tomorrow Chairperson Michael Arrowwood continued, saying, "This coalition and package of policy recommendations reflect what Wisconsin water recreationists want and need to ensure recreational opportunities and Wisconsin waters are being protected. Walleye angling in Wisconsin alone is a tremendously huge sport and ensuring walleye and other fish habitat is protected is key."

Independent reviews and studies show the need for a large buffer to protect lake beds and shorelines. The most recent and most comprehensive on-the-water field testing of wake boats is a 2022 peer-reviewed study by the University of Minnesota. The study shows the increased energy and power held in waves created by these boats during wake-enhanced operations, and how it differs substantially from other watercraft.

Hans Meyer, Vice President, Lakes at Stake Wisconsin stated, "The State of Wisconsin needs these minimum standards to protect our shared resource. And at the same time, preserving local control for greater standards is a key concept. People who live in the area, work in the area and nearby, and raise their families in the area should have control in protecting their local lakes."

Cody Kamrowski, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, concluded by stating "Beyond damage to lake bottoms and shorelines, we're very concerned about the potential transfer of invasive species between lakes if the ballasts on these boats are not properly decontaminated. Especially considering invasive Quagga mussels were found last month in Lake Geneva, a first for a Wisconsin inland lake"

Recent reports have surfaced regarding the removal of local control and implementing a buffer of 300 feet for wake-enhanced boating. Both positions are strongly opposed by the coalition. The ability to protect and preserve Wisconsin's unique glacial lakes and rivers from damage and hazardous wake caused by enhanced wake sports can only be achieved via the coalition's four pillars outlined above.

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